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THE LITERARY HISTORY

OF THE

AMERICAN REVOLUTION

1763–1783

BY

MOSES COIT TYLER

Professor of American History and Literature in Cornell University

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
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TO

JEANNETTE GILBERT TYLER

THIS BOOK

IS

LOVINGLY DEDICATED

BY

HER HUSBAND

PREFACE.

THERE would, perhaps, be no injustice in describing this book as the product of a new method, at least of a method never before so fully applied, in the critical treatment of the American Revolution. The outward history of that famous procedure has been many times written, and is now, by a new breed of American scholars, being freshly rewritten in the light of larger evidence, and under the direction of a more disinterested and a more judicial spirit. In the present work, for the first time in a systematic and a fairly complete way, is set forth the inward history of our Revolution—the history of its ideas, its spiritual moods, its motives, its passions, even of its sportive caprices and its whims, as these uttered themselves at the time, whether consciously or not, in the various writings of the two parties of Americans who promoted or resisted that great movement.

The plan of the author has been to let both parties in the controversy—the Whigs and the Tories, the Revolutionists and the Loyalists—tell their own story freely in their own way, and without either of them being liable, at our hands, to posthumous outrage in the shape of partisan imputations

on their sincerity, their magnanimity, their patriotism, or their courage. Moreover, for the purpose of historic interpretation, the author has recognized the value of the lighter, as well as of the graver, forms of literature, and consequently has here given full room to the lyrical, the humorous, and the satirical aspects of our Revolutionary record —its songs, ballads, sarcasms, its literary facetiæ. The entire body of American writings, from 1763 to 1783, whether serious or mirthful, in prose or in verse, is here delineated in its most characteristic examples, for the purpose of exhibiting the several stages of thought and emotion through which the American people passed during the two decades of the struggle which resulted in our national Independence.

By comparison, then, with the usual way of dealing with the subject, this study of the American Revolution brings about a somewhat different adjustment of its causal forces, of its instruments, its sequences, its acts, and its actors. The proceedings of legislative bodies, the doings of cabinet ministers and of colonial politicians, the movements of armies, are not here altogether disregarded, but they are here subordinated: they are mentioned, when mentioned at all, as mere external incidents in connection with the ideas and the emotions which lay back of them or in front of them, which caused them or were caused by them. One result of this method, also, is an entirely new distribution of the tokens of historic prominence—of what is called fame —among the various participants in that very considerable

business. Instead of fixing our eyes almost exclusively, as is commonly done, upon statesmen and generals, upon party leaders, upon armies and navies, upon Congress, upon parliament, upon the ministerial agents of a brain-sick king, or even upon that brain-sick king himself, and instead of viewing all these people as the sole or the principal movers and doers of the things that made the American Revolution, we here for the most part turn our eyes away toward certain persons hitherto much neglected, in many cases wholly forgotten —toward persons who, as mere writers, and whether otherwise prominent or not, nourished the springs of great historic events by creating and shaping and directing public opinion during all that robust time; who, so far as we here regard them, wielded only spiritual weapons; who still illustrate, for us and for all who choose to see, the majestic operation of ideas, the creative and decisive play of spiritual forces, in the development of history, in the rise and fall of nations, in the aggregation and the division of races. Accordingly, in this particular history of the American Revolution, our heroes are such, not because they were mighty ministers of state, or mighty politicians and law-makers, or mighty generals; our heroes are such, chiefly, because they were mere penmen—only essayists, pamphleteers, sermon writers, song writers, tale tellers, or satirists, the study of whose work, it is believed, may open to us a view of the more delicate and elusive, but not less profound or less real, forces which made that period so great, and still so worthy of being truly understood by us. Finally, as we have here

to do, not so much with the old, official, and conspicuous actors in the Revolution as, in many cases, with its unseen, its unofficial, and its almost unremembered ones,—as we here concern ourselves less frequently with the political and military chiefs of that stormy transaction, and more frequently with its literary chiefs,—so, also, are we here brought into a rather direct and familiar acquaintance with the American people themselves, on both sides of the dispute, as, sitting at their firesides or walking in their streets, they were actually stirred to thought and passion by the arrival of the daily budget of news touching an affair of incomparable moment to themselves. Just what this book aims to be, then, is a presentation of the soul, rather than of the body, of the American Revolution; a careful, independent, and, if possible, an unbiased register of the very brain and heart of the sorely divided people of the land, as these wrought, and rejoiced, and suffered, in the progress of those tremendous political and military events which constitute the exterior and visible framework of our heroic age.

Often, while engaged in the studies upon which this book is founded, and now, still more deeply, as I pass in final review their formulated results, have I been impressed by the tragedy and the pathos of the period between 1763 and 1783, as the birth time of a most bitter race feud—a race feud implacable, perhaps, and endless, but altogether needless; of a fatal disagreement between the two great branches of a race which, at this moment, holds an historic position

in the world and an historic opportunity, not only the most extensive and the most splendid, but the most benignant, that was ever attained by any similar group of human beings upon this planet. To show that this race feud need not, after all, be an endless one, that already its fierceness has had expression enough, and that its wrath has now too long outlasted the going down of the sun; in short, to bring together once more into sincere friendship, into a rational and a sympathetic moral unity, these divided members of a family capable, if in substantial harmony, of leading the whole human race upward to all the higher planes of culture and happiness,—this is an object which, in our time, draws into its service the impassioned desires, the hopes, the prayers, the labors, of many of the noblest men and women in Great Britain and in America. I must confess that, in the book now offered to the public, I have written a new history of the origin and growth and culmination of this race feud, so far as I am able to do so, in the simple service of historic truth, and without permitting myself to be turned this way or that by any consideration touching the practical consequences that might result either from fidelity or from infidelity to my duty as an historian. At the same time, I now greatly mistake the case, if one practical consequence of this history, so far as it may find readers at all, shall not be eirenic, rather than polemic,—namely, the promotion of a better understanding, of a deeper respect, of a kindlier mood, on both sides of the ocean, among the descendants of those determined men who so bitterly differed in opinion,

so fiercely fought, and, in their anger, so widely parted company, a century and a quarter ago.

In the researches which the present work has required—researches that have been in progress, though with many interruptions, for more than twenty years—I have been aided directly and indirectly by many persons, whose kindness, gratefully recognized at the time, I here publicly commemorate in this general acknowledgment; but, for special help, particularly in the discovery or in the use of rare literary materials, I desire to express my deep obligations to Mr. F. D. Stone, of the library of the Pennsylvania Historical Society; to Mr. Paul Leicester Ford, of Brooklyn; to Mr. Franklin Burdge, of New York; to Mr. Wilberforce Eames, of the Lenox Library; to Mr. William Kelby, of the library of the New York Historical Society; to Professor Franklin B. Dexter, of Yale University; to Mr. John Nicholas Brown, of Providence; to Mr. William E. Foster, of the Providence Public Library; to Mr. Edmund M. Barton, of the library of the American Antiquarian Society; to Mr. Charles A. Cutter, formerly librarian of the Boston Athenæum, and to Mr. William C. Lane, the present librarian of that institution; to Dr. Justin Winsor, the librarian of Harvard University; to Mr. F. L. Kiernan, superintendent of circulation in the Harvard library; and to Dr. Samuel Abbot Green, of the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Of course, during many years, I have had innumerable occasions, in the prosecution of my work, to tax the unfailing courtesy and helpfulness

of Mr. George William Harris, the librarian of the University with which I am connected. To its assistant librarian, also, Mr. Willard Austin, I am greatly indebted for his patient and expert assistance in revising the proof-sheets of this book.

M. C. T.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY,
24 January, 1897.

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THE LITERARY HISTORY

OF THE

AMERICAN REVOLUTION

FIRST PART

1763–1776

CHAPTER I.

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I.

In the intellectual process of the American Revolution, are to be observed three well defined stages of development on the part of the men who began and carried through that notable enterprise. The first stage—extending from the spring of 1763 to the spring of 1775—represents the noble anxiety which brave men must feel when their political safety is imperilled, this anxiety, however, being deepened

in their case by a sincere and even a passionate desire, while roughly resisting an offensive ministerial policy, to keep within the bounds of constitutional opposition, and neither to forsake nor to forfeit that connection with the Mother Country which they then held to be among the most precious of their earthly possessions. The second stage—extending from the spring of 1775 to the early summer of 1776—represents a rapidly spreading doubt, and yet at first no more than a doubt, as to the possibility of their continuing to be free men without ceasing to be English colonists. This doubt, of course, had been felt by not a few of them long before the day of the Lexington and Concord fights; but under the appalling logic of that day of brutality, it became suddenly weaponed with a power which mere words never had,—the power to undo swiftly, in the hearts of a multitude of liegemen, the tie of race, the charm of an antique national tradition, the loyalty, the love, and the pride of centuries. The third stage—extending from the early summer of 1776 to the very close of the whole struggle—represents a final conviction, at least on the part of a working majority of the American people, that it would be impossible for them to preserve their political rights and at the same time to remain inside the British empire,—this conviction being also accompanied by the resolve to preserve those rights whether or no, and at whatsoever cost of time, or effort, or pain.

Of course, the intellectual attitude of the Loyalists of the Revolution—always during that period an immense and a very conscientious minority—correlated to that of the Revolutionists in each one of these three stages of development: in the first stage, by a position of qualified dissent as to the gravity of the danger and as to the proper method of dealing with it; in the second and the third stages, by a position of unqualified dissent, and of implacable hostility, as regards the object and motive and method of the opposition which was then conducted by their more masterful fellow-countrymen.

II.

Taking our stand, therefore, near the beginning of what proved to be a Revolutionary period, and casting our eyes forward across that entire tract of time as now spread out before us under the light with which history shines upon it, let us interpret to ourselves its peculiar character, particularly with reference to the promise, or even the possibility, of a literary outcome from it.

Not a period of repose, civic or domestic or personal, as we see at the first glance; not a period of quiet respiration for man, or woman, or society; no normal social movement; the forces of heart and of brain not left free to assert themselves in undisturbed or spontaneous action; a time, rather, of exceptional upheaval, perturbation, tumult, in which the English race in America appears to be in desperate struggle for self-preservation against fatal assault from without and from within; hence, a time in which violent political action, and subsidiary to that, long, painful, and costly military action, absorbs nearly all possible energies locked up in that population of Americans. Moreover, it is to be noted that the deepest impulse to all this enormous social upheaval and effort is derived from the need, only gradually making itself manifest, and even then to only a portion of the community, of a complete and final detachment of America from all external authority whatsoever, whether resident in England or elsewhere on this planet. "But, in reality," so pleaded, with pathetic seriousness, many of the best Americans of that time, "in reality, is there such need of our detachment from external authority, especially from the authority of the Mother Country?" And to this question, the very people who asked it never failed to make answer, firmly and sternly,— "No!" And they were sincere; but on the issue thus framed, came that final and dreadful divergence among the Americans themselves, which led to a mutual animosity more rancorous, more inappeasable, than even the animosity

of the Revolutionary party toward their British assailants. This most bitter discord, within a population that needed all its force united and massed against the common danger from without, only added intellectual complication and a sort of exquisite ferocity to a period already sufficiently enmeshed in confusion and hate.

Such is the epoch into which we now presume to look in search of literature: an epoch, as it appears, uptorn by moral earthquakes, and swept by hurricanes of passion; a fatal time, sorrowful, grim, pitiless; a time of immense hope, of immense wrath, of immense despair; a time when, even among ancient friends, even among kinsmen once most dear, were flashing eyes and clenched fists, whole families being broken asunder forever in death, or in a hatred worse than death; a time of battle-fields, and prison-ships, and scaffolds, of cities sacked and burned, of rich provinces laid waste and left bleeding and desolate; weeks and months dragging themselves out into years during which, for two or three millions of men and women, life and all that life is worth living for, were in suspense. In such an epoch, why look for literature? Can it be supposed that, at such a time, any literary thing was, or could have been, done in this land, which it would be worth our while now to shake from the dust of a hundred years, and to inspect even for a single moment?

It has fallen to my lot to turn over and to look through very many pages, in manuscript and in print, produced during that period; and I must bear witness that I have not found many pages, whether serious or sportive, amid the lines of which did not seem to be audible the reverberation of that old civic rancor,—reluctant but at last determined revolution, eager and fierce resistance to revolution. This, indeed, is the one best note of sincerity, of authenticity, in these writings. And since the authentic and sincere literature of any period is the recorded utterance of the uppermost and the undermost thought of that period,—its thought and emotion both,—there would be room for distrust or for

disdain should we find proof that many Americans, between 1763 and 1783, had written altogether disinterested or passionless pages, or had dealt with tranquil literary themes, in song or story or philosophy, wholly apart from those themes that were then rushing to mortal combat in the brains and on the battle-fields of that time.

III.

The chief trait, therefore, of American literature during the period now under view is this: its concern with the problems of American society, and of American society in a peculiar condition—aroused, inflammable, in a state of alarm for its own existence, but also in a state of resolute combat for it. The literature which we are thus to inspect is not, then, a literature of tranquillity, but chiefly a literature of strife, or, as the Greeks would have said, of agony; and, of course, it must take those forms in which intellectual and impassioned debate can be most effectually carried on. The literature of our Revolution has almost everywhere the combative note; its habitual method is argumentative, persuasive, appealing, rasping, retaliatory; the very brain of man seems to be in armor; his wit is in the gladiator's attitude of offense and defense. It is a literature indulging itself in grimaces, in mockery, in scowls: a literature accented by earnest gestures meant to convince people, or by fierce blows meant to smite them down. In this literature we must not expect to find art used for art's sake. Nay, art itself, so far as it is here at all, is swept into the universal conscription, and enrolled for the service of the one party or of the other in the imperilled young Republic. No man is likely to be in the mood for æsthetics who has an assassin's pistol at his head. Even the passion for the beautiful has been known to yield to the instinct for self-preservation.

IV.

Looking, then, into this period of great civic trouble, and being content that the authentic literary product of it should also have a troubled look—a look of anxiety and wrath and combat—our next discovery is the rather notable one that such a period actually had a literary product very considerable in amount. Even in those perturbed years between 1763 and 1783, there was a large mass of literature produced in America. This fact will perhaps bring to us a surprise, almost a perplexity. Is it credible? How can this be? Certainly, great deeds were done in those years, and great words spoken—words that had the quality of great deeds; and yet, as we shall be tempted to say, that was a time for fighting, not for writing: it was a time for a game of politics astute, robust, unrelenting; for the courage of a creative statesmanship; for a diplomacy with wit enough to confront and conciliate a world; for a generalship that could make an army look military, though dressed in rags, that could make that army march though it had no shoes, that could make it formidable though destitute of gunpowder; for a daily and a nightly warfare, on the part of two or three millions of people, against starvation, and rags, and bankruptcy; and it may well seem incredible that, under such circumstances, any people could produce writings which should have any quality that now entitles them to literary remembrance, or which it would not be a barbarous ingratitude for us to subject to criticism.

This is the first view of the situation. Let us now look a little deeper, and we shall see that, within the range of those literary forms capable of articulating the moods of a period of civil and military conflict, large literary production is the very result to be expected. For on what does any sort of literary production depend? Of course, it depends on the quickening of man's nature, especially of his intellect and his emotions. And what is a period of war, and especially of civil war, and more especially of revolutionary civil war,

but an extraordinary quickening of the intellectual and emotional energies of man ?

The turbulence of the time may, indeed, become so great as to drive out from the human spirit all sense of security; but in that case, the only certain result on literature will be to drive out the tranquil forms of literary expression, leaving all the forces of the quickened life of the people free to concentrate themselves upon those forms of literary expression which are not tranquil, that is, which are combative.

Moreover, in the case of the American Revolution, literary production within the special range thus indicated, was likely to be the greater for the reason that that Revolution was pre-eminently a revolution caused by ideas, and pivoted on ideas. Of course, all revolutions are in some sense caused by ideas and pivoted on them; but in the case of most revolutions, the ideal causes of them are not generally perceived, and therefore are not generally acted upon until those ideal causes become fully interpreted through real evils, generally through a long experience of real evils. This was the case, for example, with the French Revolution. But in the case of the American Revolution, the people did not wait until ideal evils had become real evils. With a political intelligence so alert and so sensitive as to discern those evils while still afar off, they made their stand, not against tyranny inflicted, but only against tyranny anticipated. They produced the Revolution, not because they were as yet actual sufferers, but because they were good logicians, and were able to prove that, without resistance, they or their children would some day become actual sufferers. As was said of them by a great contemporary statesman in England, they judged " of the pressure of the grievance by the badness of the principle." They augured " misgovernment at a distance." They snuffed " the approach of tyranny in every tainted breeze." [1] Hence, more than with most other epochs of revolutionary strife,

[1] Edmund Burke, " Speech on Moving his Resolutions for Conciliation with the Colonies," March 22, 1775. " Works," ii. 125.

our epoch of revolutionary strife was a strife of ideas: a long warfare of political logic; a succession of annual campaigns in which the marshalling of arguments not only preceded the marshalling of armies, but often exceeded them in impression upon the final result.

An epoch like this, therefore,—an epoch in which nearly all that is great and dear in man's life on earth has to be argued for, as well as to be fought for, and in which ideas have a work to do quite as pertinent and quite as effective as that of bullets,—can hardly fail to be an epoch teeming with literature, with literature, of course, in the particular forms suited to the purposes of political co-operation and conflict.

V.

In preparing ourselves to deal properly with the Literary History of the American Revolution, we shall be much helped by keeping in mind the distinction between two classes of writings then produced among us: first, those writings which were the result of certain general intellectual interests and activities apart from the Revolutionary movement, and, secondly, those writings which were the result of intellectual interests and activities directly awakened and sustained by that movement.

The presence of the first class we discover chiefly in the earlier years of this period, before the Revolutionary idea had become fully developed and fully predominant ; and, again, in the later years of the period, when, with the success of the Revolution assured, the Revolutionary idea had begun to recede, and men's minds were free to swing again toward the usual subjects of human concern, particularly toward those which were to occupy them after the attainment of Independence and of peace.

There, to begin with, are those writings which stand for the spiritual side of man's nature,—his thought respecting the Divine and the human and the relations between the two, respecting the mystery of existence, respecting the law

of life here and hereafter. Even amid all the uproar and anguish of a harsh political and military conflict, this sovereign interest of the soul could never be stifled; nay, in the prevailing instability of all earthly good, men were driven more than ever to find sustenance and repose in the consideration of a form of good that should outlast the world. Thus, it was in 1769 that Joseph Bellamy published his "Four Dialogues between a Minister and his Parishioner concerning the Half-Way Covenant"[1]; it was in 1770 that John Woolman published his "Considerations on the True Harmony of Mankind"[2]; it was in 1773 that Samuel Hopkins published his "Inquiry into the Nature of True Holiness."[3]

There, also, are those writings which stand for the delight of man in the visible framework of nature in the New World, and for his curiosity to pierce into the secrets of that New World as hidden in plant, and mineral, and animal: descriptions of the American wilderness, narratives of travel among the native peoples, with sketches of their characters and ways. Most prominent in this group are the "Historical Account of Bouquet's Expedition against the Ohio Indians," the "Journals" of Major Robert Rogers, together with his "Concise Account of North America," William Stork's "Description of East Florida," Carver's "Travels through the Interior Parts of North America," and James Adair's "History of the American Indians."

There, likewise, are the writings which stand for the interest of the American people in their own past, testifying in this case, also, to a noble impulse surviving from the colonial time; such as the fragments of local history by Stephen Hopkins, by Amos Adams, by Nathan Fiske; the ponderous historical monograph of Robert Proud on the origin of Pennsylvania; the ecclesiastical histories of Morgan Edwards and of Isaac Backus; and, above all, the two

[1] The Works of Bellamy, ii. 665–711.
[2] The Works of Woolman, 350–381.
[3] The Works of Hopkins, iii. 3–141.

noble volumes of Thomas Hutchinson on the history of Massachusetts down to within fifteen years of the Stamp Act.

Even for literature in the higher sense of that word,—literature as an expression of the æsthetic mood, literature apart from mere instruction, apart, also, from the aims of any debate,—we shall find, within the first decade of this period and before its culmination into the final violence of the Revolutionary controversy, the beginnings of a new and a truer life in America. Of this new literary life there were, in general, two chief centres, one in the New England, one in the Middle Colonies. The New England literary centre was at New Haven, and was dominated by the influence of Yale College, within which, especially between 1767 and 1773, was a group of brilliant young men passionately devoted to the Greek and Roman classics, and brought into contact with the spirit of modern letters through their sympathetic study of the later masters of English prose and verse. The foremost man in this group was John Trumbull. The new literary life of the Middle Colonies had its seat in the neighborhood of New York and Philadelphia, and was keenly stimulated by the influence of their two colleges, and also by that of the College of New Jersey under the strong man who came to its presidency in 1768. The foremost representative of this new literary tendency was Philip Freneau, a true man of genius, the one poet of unquestionable originality granted to America prior to the nineteenth century. Of him and of his brother poet in New England, it is to be said that both began to do their work while still in youth; both seemed to have a vocation for disinterested literature in prose as well as in verse; both were reluctantly driven from that vocation by the intolerable political storm that then burst over the land; both were swept into the Revolutionary movement, and, thenceforward, the chief literary work of both was as political satirists. From about the year 1774, little trace of an æsthetic purpose in American letters is to be discovered until after the close of the Revolution.

While, therefore, these several forms of literature, as produced among us at any time between 1763 and 1783, have their value as enabling us to ascertain and to feel certain minor phases of the life of that period, it is not into them that we are to look for an expression of its most characteristic life—the life that made that period so great in its effects upon the development of the American people, and still so interesting to all students of the later history of mankind. The characteristic life of the period we now have in view was political, and not political only, but polemic, and fiercely polemic, and at last revolutionary; and its true literary expression is to be recognized in those writings, whether in prose or in verse, which gave utterance to that life. Such writings seem naturally to fall into nine principal classes.

VI.

First, may here be named the correspondence of the time; especially, the letters touching on public affairs which passed between persons in different portions of America, and in which men of kindred opinions found one another out, informed one another, stimulated, guided, aided one another, in the common struggle. Indeed, the correspondence of our Revolution, both official and unofficial, constitutes a vast, a fascinating, and a significant branch of its literature. Very strange would it have been had it been otherwise. An immense peril was, or seemed to be, approaching those kindred but sundered communities. In all those communities the men who meant even by force to resist that peril, or to resist those who thought there was a peril to be so resisted, needed to ascertain one another's existence, to interchange opinions, to come into united measures. This they could not do, in those days of arduous and snail-paced travel, by personal interviews; and therefore far more than can ever again be the case, communication by writing was then the only means of bringing about any general concert of thought or action. Moreover, at that

time, the art of letter-writing for ordinary personal uses had not yet been overtaken by the fatal boon of cheap postage, and perhaps the still more fatal boon of stenographic dictation; and consequently it had not lost consciousness of its own fine function, nor become content that its missives should, in personal quality at least, be worth as little as they now cost. In those days men and women still took time to write letters, and to write them with their own hands, and to put ideas into what they wrote, and the individual touch, deliberate and deft expression, playfulness, and grace, and force.

Undoubtedly, the best of all the letter-writers of the time was Franklin; and next to him, perhaps, were John Adams, and Abigail Adams, his wife. Indeed the letters of Mrs. Adams, mostly to her husband, and covering this entire period, are among the most delightful specimens of such work as done by any American: they are alive with the very moods and scenes of the Revolution; they reveal, also, the strong intelligence, the high faith, the splendid courage of that noble matron, and the secret of her life-long power as the intellectual companion of her husband, his one and only confidante, and the inspirer of all that was greatest and best in his career. Not far behind these first three letter-writers, if indeed they were behind them, must be mentioned Jefferson and John Dickinson; and, for shrewdness of observation, for humor, for lightness of touch, for the gracious negligée of cultivated speech, not far behind any of them, was a letter-writer now almost unknown, Richard Peters of Philadelphia. Of course, no one goes to the letters of Washington, in the expectation of finding there sprightliness of thought, flexibility, or ease of movement; yet, in point of diligence and productiveness, he was one of the great letter-writers of that age, while all that he ever wrote has the incommunicable worth of his powerful and noble character—sincerity, purity, robustness, freedom from all morbid vapors, soundness of judgment ripened under vast responsibility. Who can hope ever to know the mind and

conscience of our Revolution, its motive, its conduct, its stern and patient purpose, or its cost, without studying Washington's letters ?

It does not belong to the purpose of the present work, to make any other than an incidental mention of this immense class of writings,—writings which, in fact, scarcely came to the public eye during that period, and which seem to require, as they would well reward, a separate treatise for their full presentation. Considerable portions of all this Revolutionary correspondence have now passed into print; very large portions of it still remain in manuscript; already much has perished by fire, by mildew, by neglect. As a whole, however, the epistolary record of the Revolution, could we now look upon it, would set forth for us, in vivid contemporary colors, every passing phase of that time of mighty commotion; and would embody for us naïve examples of narrative, of character-painting, of earnest and high-spirited discussion, and many a passage of genuine pathos, and satire, and wit.

VII.

The second form of literature embodying the characteristic life of our Revolutionary era, is made up of those writings which were put forth at nearly every critical stage of the long contest, either by the local legislatures, or by the General Congress, or by prominent men in public office, and which may now be described comprehensively as State Papers.

It is probable that we have never yet sufficiently considered the extraordinary intellectual merits of this great group of writings, or the prodigious practical service which, by means of those merits, they rendered to the struggling cause of American self-government, particularly in procuring for the insurrectionary colonists, first, the respectful recognition, and then the moral confidence, of the civilized world. The writers of these State Papers were the representatives of

the great party of discontent. They were among the ablest and most cultivated men in the several colonies to which they belonged. Prior to the occasion which first brought them together into an intercolonial assemblage, they were in person scarcely known to one another, while to the world at large they were of course quite unknown. Indeed, the world at large then knew but little of the American people in any way, and cared still less for them. In spite of this, however, the members of these intercolonial assemblages, obscure provincial politicians though they then were, began to send forth, first in the year 1765 and again in the year 1774, their elaborate and stately appeals to the reason and the justice of mankind. At the time when these papers were issued, the people of Europe were becoming dimly aware of some sort of political disturbance in America, and with that condescension which still sits so gracefully upon them in their occasional allusions to us, were beginning to ask, what sort of people these Americans might be like. Whether they were white, or red, or black, was not then generally known in Europe, if indeed the mind of Europe can be said even yet to be altogether clear upon that difficult question; but were the Americans even a civilized people? Evidently, whatever they were, they were not disposed to an abject submission to their parent state; but, in what spirit, according to what method, were they asserting their supposed claims? Was it in a spirit of sheer lawlessness, of wild, fierce, and truculent insubordination? And if the Americans were indeed sufficiently advanced in culture to have acquired the art of writing, what sort of announcements of themselves would they be capable of putting forth? Very naturally, their writings would be crude in thought, inconclusive in reasoning, destitute of the great precedents and traditions of political literature as cherished in the older portions of the world, and expressed of course in the fervor and rant of gasconading patriotism and of revolutionary rhapsody. It was under precisely these circumstances that the State Papers, for

example, of the Stamp Act Congress and of the Congress of 1774, were borne across the Atlantic, and distributed among the publicists of Europe. These constituted, indeed, the first conspicuous and authoritative presentation to the Old World of the intellectual and political condition of the New. It is now known with what surprise many enlightened men in Europe, who had imagined that the Americans were a rabble of illiterate backwoodsmen, of headstrong, blustering and law-defying revolutionists, then read these political documents,—finding in them nearly every quality indicative of personal, and national greatness, —reverence, sobriety, conservatism, familiarity with history, exact and extensive legal learning, the most lucid exposition of constitutional principles, urbanity of tone, and a literary execution at once graceful and forceful,—showing, indeed, that somehow, out into that American wilderness had been carried the very accent of cosmopolitan thought and speech.

VIII.

The third class of writings directly expressive of the spirit and life of the Revolution, consists of oral addresses, either secular or sacred,—that is, of speeches, formal orations, and political sermons. The interest now to be found in the reading of these productions must be derived almost wholly from one's perception of their value as authentic interpretations of the thought and passion of their time. Undoubtedly, the best words actually spoken during the Revolution were the words that did not survive the occasions which called them forth,—namely, the speeches that leaped from the lips of a few great statesmen and orators in the strenuous passages of those debates which, in the provincial assemblies or in the great congresses, decided the course of American policy in opposition to the measures of the ministry. Spoken, as these speeches were, behind closed doors, heard by no official reporters, they have lived since then only in the historic effects they wrought, in vague tradition,

or in the fragmentary jottings of some ear-witness who happened to be a letter-writer or a diarist. As to the formal oratory of this period, much of which went into print, it must be described as having very little of the sparkle and flavor of Revolutionary life, being to a degree passing all modern endurance, verbose, stilted, and jejune. Unquestionably, the most vital of the survivals of the spoken eloquence of the Revolution are in the form of political discourses from a few chiefs of the Revolutionary pulpit.

IX.

The three classes of writings just mentioned, have their undoubted value in enabling us to trace the Literary History of the American Revolution; and yet their value for this purpose is somewhat less than that of the fourth class of writings now to be mentioned, namely, the political essays of the period. More than in all other publications, it was in these political essays that the American people, on both sides of the great controversy, gave utterance to their real thoughts, their real purposes, their fears, their hopes, their hatreds, touching the bitter questions which then divided them,—doing so under almost every form of expression, from serious argument and earnest persuasion, to mere invective, vituperation, and banter.

Respecting these political essays, however, a somewhat mechanical distinction has to be noted,—a distinction arising from the fact that some of them were written for publication in their newspapers, while the others were written for publication as separate tracts. This distinction, slight as it may seem, is worth considering, since it develops two rather important peculiarities attaching to all popular discussion in the eighteenth century, on both sides of the Atlantic,—the subordinate place then occupied by the newspaper, the supreme place then occupied by the pamphlet.

In our own time, the imperial function of journalism, as an instrument of immediate influence, in almost every

sphere of thought and action, is fully developed and fully recognized. The analogy can hardly deserve to be called a forced one, if modern journalism, for its instantaneous and enormous power, be compared to ancient oratory, as oratory was, for example, at Athens in her great days. Indeed, journalism has now grown to be the universal silent oratory of the human race: it is oratory dispensing with a vocal rendering, for the reason that it has found in the printed sheet a mightier elocution than that of the human voice.

Of course, at the period of the American Revolution, journalism had nowhere reached this advanced stage of effectiveness. In America, especially, the newspapers were petty, dingy, languid, inadequate affairs; and the department of the newspaper now devoted to editorial writing, then scarcely existed at all. Nevertheless, while the editor of those days was only the printer, and merely arranged and put into type what went into his paper, instead of himself writing any part of what went into it, he had, especially in times of excitement, the active assistance of a magnificent staff of unpaid contributors,—the foremost men in the land, politicians, lawyers, clergymen, scholars, and other men of cultivated thought and leadership,—who found the columns of these journals a convenient medium for the instant diffusion of their opinions, and who, accordingly, wrote for these dull-looking, ill-printed, little sheets, some of the most finished and most forceful specimens of literary work done among us in those days. In this particular, also, the newspapers then published in America differed but little from the newspapers then published in England. In the latter, says the English editor of a recent edition of "Junius," "there existed none of those leading articles or elaborate commentaries on public questions, which now occupy so prominent a place in our daily papers. The correspondents of the press were then the only writers of political communications which bore the character of leaders; and, as reports of the debates were not permitted, members of either house suffered equally with the people in possessing

no common channel by which the one could learn, and the other convey, their sentiments. In consequence of this restrictive system, the correspondence of newspapers formed the most talented portion of their contents, influential men of all parties adopting this medium as the best for giving publicity to their opinions."[1]

We have but a slight step to take in passing from these brief political essays written for our Revolutionary newspapers, to those longer and more elaborate political essays which first saw the light in the form of pamphlets. In taking this step, however, it is well for us to recall the great part played by this form of literature in the two centuries preceding our own,—a form of literature now almost extinct. The pamphlet is the immediate ancestor of the newspaper; and, like a good ancestor, it first carefully reared its colossal child, and then promptly got out of the way, leaving to its offspring the inheritance of the whole estate—which was, in fact, the entire world of readers. The maturity of journalism really meant the old age and death of pamphleteering. For the first three hundred years, however, after the introduction of printing, journalism was either unborn or in its infancy and during the most of that time, the pamphlet had perhaps the highest place among the instruments of immediate popular influence. The seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries may be called the classic era of the English pamphlet. No reader of English literature can forget how John Milton, just on the threshold of his manhood, and with all his powers of poetic utterance in fresh and jubilant action, turned away from the starry call of poetry, abandoned his dream of a great national epic on King Arthur, and of a dramatic poem on the Fall of Man, and gave up his health, his eyesight, and the vigor of the best twenty years of his life, in order to devote himself to this tremendous function of writing pamphlets on English politics. The chief significance of John Dryden in his non-dramatic and non-lyric poetry, may almost be said to be

[1] John Wade, in "Junius," ii. Preface, iii.–iv.

that which attaches to a writer of political pamphlets in verse. The power which centred in Dean Swift, and on account of which even great statesmen and noblemen paid court to a rough and plebeian priest in the Irish Establishment, was, in no inconsiderable part, derived from the fear and the hope he inspired as a writer of pamphlets. And when, shortly before our Revolution, Samuel Johnson, having in his Dictionary defined the word pension as "an allowance made to any one without an equivalent," and as being in England "generally understood to mean pay given to a state-hireling for treason to his country," himself submitted to receive a pension, doubtless many people in England felt that the pamphlets which he afterwards wrote in defense of the colonial policy of the ministry and in disparagement of the American claim, were so splendid an equivalent for this bounty of the government, as to protect him from the backward stroke of at least the first part of his own sarcasm.

It was in such a period, therefore,—the later stage of the classic pamphleteering period,—that our Revolution was wrought out. The great part performed in that conflict by pamphlets written by Americans on both sides of the question, was, therefore, fully in accord with the literary method then prevalent in all political discussion; and it has bequeathed to us the most abundant and the most important of all existing materials for our Literary History during that period. Indeed, to so marked a degree was this form of literature the chief weapon in the intellectual warfare of the American Revolution, that even its approach might have been challenged in the very words with which the approach of Gloster is challenged by Winchester, in the play:

> "Com'st thou with deep premeditated lines,
> With written pamphlets studiously devised?"[1]

The political essay, then, whether in the shape of the newspaper article or in that of the pamphlet, gives us the

[1] King Henry VI. Part I. Act iii. Sc. 1.

most characteristic type of American literature for that portion of the eighteenth century. It is this form of writing, also, which is chiefly meant, when historians now speak of what they are apt to call the political press, in America or in England. Thus, the power of the political essay in America during the Revolution is perfectly, even if unconsciously, described by Sir Erskine May when, of the political press in England during the same period, he says, that, having first proved "its influence as an auxiliary in party warfare" it began "to rise above party, and to become a great popular power,—the representative of public opinion."[1] Another and a still later English historian has likewise called attention to the striking fact that even in England itself, "the political power of the press, and the struggle with America" began at the same time, that is, with the ministry of George Grenville.[2] In this respect, moreover, the literature of the American Revolution seems to correspond to that of France during the closing years of the eighteenth century,—"une littérature devenue toute politique, et, pour dernier œuvre, faisant naître la tribune."[3] Furthermore, the worth of just these literary memorials of political controversy, for interpreting the life of any people to whom such methods of political controversy are permitted, was recognised long before the American Revolution by a famous English prelate who was also a learned political philosopher. "The bent and genius of the age," said Bishop Kennet, "is best known in a free country, by the pamphlets and papers that daily come out as the sense of the parties and sometimes as the voice of the nation."[4]

Finally, as to the great body of those political essays

[1] May, "Const. Hist. Eng.," ii. 247.

[2] J. R. Green, "Short Hist. English People," 733.

[3] Villemain, "Tableau de la Littérature au XVIII^e^ Siècle," iii. 195.

[4] Cited by Sir Walter Scott as a motto on the title-page of his great "Collection of Scarce and Valuable Tracts," somewhat improperly lettered on the back as "Lord Somers's Tracts." The sentence is taken from Bishop White Kennet's "Register and Chronicle, Ecclesiastical and Civil."

which were produced among us between 1763 and 1783, and through which may now be traced in unbroken sequence the development of the thought and passion of the American people during that period, it may justly be said that we ourselves have been slower to recognize their merits, than have been some of our kinsmen in England. Doubtless, among these writings are to be found not a few examples of crudity of thought and slovenliness of style, of partisan malice, of provincial pettiness, and of a dulness quite too dense for penetration by any faculties now possessed by us. Nevertheless, when Sir Edward Creasy said of the American pamphlets written in opposition to the Stamp Act, that "some of them are very able," and "for clearness of argument and boldness of political views, may be ranked with the splendid orations afterward pronounced on the same side in the British Senate,"[1] he delivered a critical judgment which may be applied with equal truth to the American pamphlets written in the later stages of the same controversy.

X.

Closely associated with the political essay as the most powerful form of prose in the literature of the American Revolution, should be mentioned the political satire, as being likewise the most powerful form of verse during the same period, and as constituting the fifth class of writings directly expressive of its thought and passion.

With the political satire, also, as with the political essay, we have to note how its extraordinary prominence during the Revolution was derived from literary conditions which existed then, but which exist no longer. In the poetic literature of modern England, satire was first made a notable weapon in political controversy by John Dryden, even as social and literary satire was brought into fresh vogue by Pope, from whom, also, it descended along the line of his poetic disciples until it found its last great masters in Gif-

[1] "British Empire," 151.

ford and Byron. Accordingly, at about the middle of the eighteenth century, these thirteen communities of Englishmen in America, so far as they were under any literary tutelage, were in poetry under the tutelage chiefly of Dryden and Pope; and in their own experiments at satiric verse, dealing with phases of social and political life in their several neighborhoods, they reflect the influences which, in all the English-speaking world, had then given such splendor and favor to this not very noble species of poetry. Certainly, the best examples of satire to be met with among us before the Revolutionary dispute had reached its culmination, may be seen in the earlier and non-political verse of Freneau and John Trumbull. As a token, also, of the intellectual habits of that age, the fact should not be overlooked that the arrival of this rather flippant literary mode was not accepted without a shock of alarm and disapproval, especially in the more sedate communities; as was discovered, for example, by the most brilliant master of satire in New England, where, as he complained,

> "—— priests drive poets to the lurch
> By fulminations of the church;
> Mark in our title-page our crimes,
> Find heresies in double rhymes,
> Charge tropes with damnable opinion,
> And prove a metaphor Arminian,
> Peep for our doctrines, as at windows,
> And pick out creeds of innuendoes."[1]

It happened, moreover, that just at the beginning of our Revolutionary era, an enormous impulse was given to the use of political satire in England, and consequently in America, through the tumultuous and dazzling success of Charles Churchill. Having in 1761, acquired sudden notoriety by his three non-political satires, "The Rosciad," "The Apology," and "Night," it was in 1762 and by his "Prophecy of Famine"—a tremendous onslaught on the

[1] Trumbull, "Poetical Works," ii. 75.

Scottish and other political enemies of Wilkes—that this brilliant but disorderly genius burst into the field of English politics. Though his profligate life came to a sudden end only two years afterward, yet in that brief interval, and through a rapid succession of satirical poems, such as "The Duellist," "Gotham," "The Candidate," and "The Ghost," he had astonished the English and the American public by the energy and variety of his resources in the literary expression of political hate and scorn, and had given thereby a fresh revelation of the effectiveness of satire in political warfare. No one can fail to see, also, that upon all his work, hasty and vindictive as much of it is, may be found, as John Forster has declared, "the coarse broad mark of sincerity."[1] It is true that the impulse thus given by Churchill to the employment of political satire in verse was, as it deserved to be, almost as brief as it was violent; yet the greatness of his temporary influence is shown, not only in the fear of him and in the flattery of him on the part of some of the most powerful politicians in England, but in the admiration or the enmity with which he was regarded by the greatest of his literary contemporaries. Goldsmith described him as a mere partisan versifier "dignified with the name of poet," whose "tawdry lampoons are called satires," whose "turbulence is said to be force, and his phrensy fire."[2] "I called the fellow a blockhead at first," said Dr. Johnson in 1763, "and I call him a blockhead still"; the "temporary currency" of Churchill's poetry being due, as the same critic thought, only to "its audacity of abuse," and to its "being filled with living names."[3] Cowper, on the other hand, declared that Churchill was a great poet; that Churchill's merits were above those of "any other contemporary writer"; indeed, that for the technique of his art he made Churchill his

[1] "Edinburgh Review," lxxxi. 69.

[2] This was in the dedication to "The Traveller," published in December, 1764, only a month after Churchill's death. Goldsmith's "Works," i. 4.

[3] Boswell, "Life of Johnson," i. 419, 418.

model.[1] At the sudden death of this poet militant many an eminent man in England seems to have breathed a sigh of relief; and the curious mixture of admiration and alarm with which some of them had regarded him, is well conveyed in the comment made by Horace Walpole on the news of Churchill's abrupt disappearance from the scene: "The meteor blazed scarce four years."[2]

Of course, it is not without some effort of the imagination that we shall now bring ourselves to understand the greatness of this satirist's influence on the literary method of political controversy, especially in America. Much of that oblivion which Johnson then so confidently predicted for Churchill's poetry, has long since befallen it. That his very name has now become indistinct to the mass of readers, and that the sort of writing he did has lost its hold upon the public respect, are abundantly implied in the question lately asked by a clever English critic—"Where is the great, the terrific, the cloud-compelling Churchill?"[3] This is a question, indeed, which no one in America could have asked during the two decades of American literature which we are about to survey. Certainly, second only to the political essay, among the literary forces of the American Revolution, was the political satire, and the political satire as stimulated by the success and shaped by the method of Churchill; and without a clear recognition of Churchill's influence upon our writers, will it be impossible to understand this extremely important phase of the Revolutionary controversy.

It is true that in that controversy no great place was given to satire until about the year 1775—that is, until the debate had nearly passed beyond the stage of argument. From that time, however, and until very near to the close of the Revolution, this form of literature rivalled, and at

[1] Southey, "Life and Works of Cowper," i. 61.

[2] Cited in an article on Churchill in "Edinburgh Review," lxxxi. 86. This article, which was by John Forster, is perhaps the best critical account of Churchill yet made. In Southey's "Life of Cowper" is an interesting and helpful chapter on Churchill.

[3] Edmund Gosse, "Questions at Issue," 105.

times almost set aside, the political essay as an instrument of impassioned political strife. On the Revolutionist side, the chief masters of political satire were Francis Hopkinson, John Trumbull, and Philip Freneau. On the side of the Loyalists, the satirical poet who in art and in power surpassed all his fellows, was Jonathan Odell.

XI.

It would be a mistake for us to forget that the development of political thought and emotion during the American Revolution may be traced in other forms of verse than in the form of regular satire,—in forms of verse, also, less artificial than such satire, nearer to the primary modes and impulses of human nature, more spontaneous, more direct, more universal. For the sixth class of writings, then, characteristic of the period, we may take the popular lyric poetry of the Revolution,—the numberless verses, commonly quite inelaborate and unadorned, that were written to be sung at the hearth-stone, by the camp-fire, on the march, on the battle-field, in all places of solemn worship,—songs for the new fatherland, for home, for liberty,—party-songs, army-songs, ballads, and hymns of patriotic thankfulness and trust. Indeed, we shall find the path of that tremendous conflict, especially the latter half of it, to be strown with verses that seem to have sprung up like wild flowers almost from the very ground over which angry men were trampling, and that still seem to breathe forth what was then in the hearts of the sorely divided people of this land. Without doubt, these folk-songs of the American Revolution should now be of uncommon use to us, as embodying, often roughly, always frankly, the sincere aspirations and antipathies of both parties in the war, or as portraying those incidents of the long struggle, heroic, pathetic, tragic, or mirthful, which at the time appealed to the admiration, or sympathy of the people, to their hope, or fear, or hatred, and, in many cases, to their mere delight

in the drolleries which always abound in the midst of happenings the most serious.

Our seventh class of Revolutionary writings will gather up the numerous literary memorials of the long struggle as a mere wit-combat, a vast miscellany of humorous productions in verse and prose which, trivial as they may seem, are yet too characteristic of the spirit and method of a great historic conflict to be here justly left out of the account. In these writings, we shall note the actual play of popular humor disporting itself amid all the ferocities of the conflict, the very jokes and jibes of the contestants, their frolicsome moods, even while in the act of fighting, their interpolations of loud laughter into the text of a composition that was in the main sufficiently serious, their literary burlesques, parodies, hoaxes, all the slight and casual reliques of the war as a war of ridicule and sarcastic repartee.

For the eighth class of Revolutionary writings, partly in prose, chiefly in verse, we shall bring together the dramatic compositions of the period,—a class not inconsiderable in number, in variety, in vigor, and thoroughly representative both of the humor and of the tragic sentiment of the period.

Finally, to the ninth class belong those prose narratives that sprang out of the actual experiences of the Revolution, and that have embodied such experiences in the several forms of personal diaries, military journals, tales of adventure on land or sea, and especially records of suffering in the military prisons. Besides these, there are several elaborate contemporary histories of the Revolution, as the third volume of Hutchinson's "History of Massachusetts," the four volumes of Gordon's "History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America," and the three volumes of Mercy Warren's "History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution."

XII.

The classification we have thus made of the somewhat diversified mass of writings handed down to us from the American Revolution, should help us to form in advance a sufficiently clear general view of the range and nature of those writings, without imposing upon us any needless mechanical restraints as we try to come into direct contact with them. In the further prosecution of our studies, it will be best for us to deal with the various writings included in these several groups, chiefly according to their historic sequence,—in the very order of time wherein they severally came into life and wrought their work in the world,—thus permitting the principal members of these different groups of literature to appear upon these pages, and to unfold their message to us, somewhat as they actually made their first appearance in the successive scenes of that great transaction in which they bore so significant a part.

This, of course, is not the place in which to express a critical judgment upon these writings, either as separate productions in literature, or as forming a collective body of literature associated with a great period in our national history. Moreover, the chief purpose of the present work is to call attention to these writings, not so much for their independent artistic value as for their humanistic and historic value, interpreting, as they do, with direct and undisguised speech, the very spirit and life and inward process of the American Revolution, nay, the very spirit and life and character, the motives, the secret moods and experiences, of that race of Americans who were concerned in bringing about the Revolution, or in trying to stay its progress. Even the French people—a nation of artists almost from their birth, to whom, especially, literary art appeals with a delicate force seldom known among us—do not fail to recognize the legitimacy and the high worth of this purely representative aspect of literature. "La littérature," they are accustomed to say, "est l'expression de la société."[1] It is

[1] J. Demogeot, "Histoire de la Littérature Française," 565.

precisely this aspect of literature which we have chiefly before us, as we here study the writings of the American people in the period now under consideration,—viewing American literature, then, chiefly as the expression of American society, stirred, and at last convulsed, by the pangs and throes of Revolution. Respecting the soundness of our method, we scarcely need to be troubled by any doubt: we are but trying to come to an immediate and somewhat intimate knowledge of the American people in their most heroic age, by means of that through which, in any age, according to Matthew Arnold, "a people best express themselves—their literature."[1] Whatever, therefore, may be our final conclusion as to the purely artistic value of this portion of American literature, it must continue to have a deep interest for us, and in some degree for all other students of the history of human nature, as containing a perfectly sincere revelation of themselves on the part of a high-spirited people in a supreme crisis of their development. For, as has been nobly said, in our own time, by a most exacting master and critic of literary art, "nothing which has ever interested living men and women can wholly lose its vitality—no language they have spoken, nor oracle by which they have hushed their voices, no dream which has once been entertained by actual human minds, nothing about which they have ever been passionate, or expended time and zeal."[2]

[1] "On the Study of Celtic Literature," 24.

[2] Walter H. Pater, "Studies in the History of the Renaissance," 38.

CHAPTER II.

THE PRELUDE OF POLITICAL DEBATE: 1761–1764.

I.—The part of James Otis in the early development of the American Revolution.

II.—The argument on the petition for writs of assistance in the Superior Court of Massachusetts, 1761—The character and effects of Otis's speech—Contemporary testimony of John Adams.

III.—Otis's early career—His interest in classical studies—His "Rudiments of Latin Prosody"—His "Rudiments of Greek Prosody"—His sound taste in modern literature—His traits as a controversial writer.

IV.—Otis takes the lead of political opinion in New England—In the Massachusetts house of representatives, he calls to account the royal governor.

V.—Otis publishes "The Vindication of the House of Representatives," 1762—Its importance in the development of constitutional ideas in America—Its leading propositions—Its relation to the subsequent literature of Revolutionary controversy.

VI.—Otis recognizes the new and stronger spirit of British colonial policy, beginning with the Peace of Paris, in 1763—The act of Parliament for raising an imperial revenue from the colonies, April, 1764—Official notification of the Stamp Act.

VII.—Otis arraigns this new policy in "The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved," July, 1764—Outline of this pamphlet—Its character and power.

VIII.—Otis's object was to find a constitutional basis for the permanent connection of the colonies with the British empire.

IX.—The debate carried on by Oxenbridge Thacher, in "The Sentiments of a British American," September, 1764—Thacher's personal history—The rational and conciliatory spirit of his argument for the recognition of American rights within the empire.

X.—Two other pamphlets for the same object, but from the industrial and commercial point of view—"An Essay on the Trade of the Northern Colonies," Philadelphia, 1764—"Some Thoughts on the Method of Improving and Securing the Advantages which accrue to Great Britain from the Northern Colonies," New York, 1764.

I

No student of the American Revolution can have failed to notice how, from beginning to end, its several stages

unfolded themselves and succeeded one another with something of the logical sequence, the proportion, and the unity of a well-ordered plot. It is quite other than a rhetorical commonplace to speak of the Revolution as a drama. And in this drama, James Otis was a very great actor. His mighty part, however, was played and completed in the earlier Acts. At the outset, no one is so prominent and so predominant. He even speaks the prologue. It is he who rushes upon the front of the stage in the first Scene, in the second, in the third. As the play goes on, he is still in the foreground,—his flashing eyes, his passionate words, his gestures of anger or of supplication, his imperious personality, seeming to direct the course of events, and to mark him as the hero of the whole plot. But, suddenly, long before the climax is reached, he disappears from the stage altogether: he no longer has any relation to the play, except as one of the motley crowd that are watching its progress, —a breathing effigy of James Otis, a man of disordered intellect and unsteady will, being occasionally seen moving mournfully through the lobbies of the theatre, and even gazing as a bewildered spectator upon the culmination of a plot which had once seemed to derive its chief force and direction from him. James Otis has no real part in the Revolution after 1769.

II.

In February, of the year 1761, the council-chamber of the Old Town House, in Boston, was the scene of a great legal debate. The room was a splendid and a stately one. The superior court of the colony was in session there. The five judges, including the chief-justice, presided in full wigs, bands, and robes of scarlet. From full-length portraits on the walls, Chares the Second and James the Second seemed to look down with mute indignation upon an assemblage of provincial politicians and lawyers, one of whom at least presumed on that occasion to discuss the spirit of their reigns

and the limits of the royal prerogative, with an uncourtly frankness for which, had they been anything but painted kings, they would have sent him to the Tower. A great throng of people filled the place. The cause to be argued there might at first glance seem to be one of no great importance,—that of the legality of granting new writs of assistance to officers of the customs in the ports of Massachusetts,—the old writs, which had been freely granted in that colony under the reign of George the Second, being then about to expire in consequence of the death of that monarch.[1] Slight as the question may seem, it did in fact reach very far; it involved the property, the political standing, the liberties, the passions, of all the American colonists of England; and the trial of it, in the presence of that great and excited assemblage, may be said to have begun a new era in the history of the human race.[2]

The argument for the writ was made by Jeremy Gridley. The case in opposition was then argued, in the first instance, by Oxenbridge Thacher, a lawyer eminent for ability and probity, who, according to the testimony of one who heard him, spoke "with the softness of manners, the ingenuity and cool reasoning, which were remarkable in his amiable character."[3] Then Otis arose to speak upon the same side. Of the speech which he thus made, the historic importance, with reference to the American Revolution, has doubtless

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[1] The account above given of the origin of this celebrated case differs in some important particulars from that usually given, *e. g.*, in George Bancroft, "Hist. U. S.," last rev., ii. 531; in Tudor, "Life of Otis," 52–53; and in J. Adams, "Works," x. 246–247. This part of my narrative is founded on Quincy's "Reports of Cases Argued and Adjudged in the Superior Court of Judicature of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, between 1761 and 1772"; especially its learned "Appendix I.," on Writs of Assistance, 395–540. The last is an important contribution to the early history of our Revolution, being the work of Horace Gray, formerly of the Suffolk bar, now one of the Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States.

[2] "This is the opening scene of American resistance," Bancroft, "Hist. U. S.," last rev., ii. 546.

[3] J. Adams, "Works," x. 247.

been overestimated by some writers. It is not an overestimation of it to say, that it forms a notable landmark in the history of our relations to the Mother Country: it is in itself an authentic token of that sensitive and proud condition of the American colonial mind out of which all the later acts of Revolutionary resistance were born; while, among the younger leaders of public opinion in the colony of Massachusetts, it gave a distinct addition both to that sensitiveness and to that pride. Only a few weeks before, Otis had laid down the office of advocate-general, for the reason that he could not support this very application for writs of assistance,—these being a judicial precept which he proceeded to describe as "the worst instrument of arbitrary power, the most destructive of English liberty and the fundamental principles of law, that ever was found in an English law-book." "I must therefore," he continued, "beg your honors' patience and attention to the whole range of an argument that may perhaps appear uncommon in many things, as well as to points of learning that are more remote and unusual. . . . I shall not think much of my pains in this cause, as I engaged in it from principle. I was solicited to argue this cause as advocate-general; and because I would not, I have been charged with desertion from my office. To this charge I can give a very sufficient answer. I renounced that office, and I argue this cause, from the same principle; and I argue it with the greater pleasure, as it is in favor of British liberty, at a time when we hear the greatest monarch upon earth declaring from his throne that he glories in the name of Briton, and that the privileges of his people are dearer to him than the most valuable prerogatives of his crown;[1] and as it is in opposition to a kind of

[1] "Born and educated in this country, I glory in the name of Briton. . . . The civil and religious rights of my loving subjects are equally dear to me with the most valuable prerogatives of my crown." From the speech of the young king, George III., on opening the first parliament after his accession, 18 November, 1760. Hansard, "Parl. Hist. of Eng.," xv. 982. This allusion in Otis's argument touched most expertly a royal utterance which was just then not only a fresh topic of news in Boston, but a theme of prodigious interest

power, the exercise of which, in former periods of English history, cost one king of England his head, and another his throne. . . . The writ prayed for in this petition, being general, is illegal. It is a power that places the liberty of every man in the hands of every petty officer. . . . In the first place, the writ is universal, being directed . . . to every subject in the king's dominions. Every one, with this writ, may be a tyrant. If this commission be legal, a tyrant in a legal manner may control, imprison, or murder any one within the realm. In the next place, it is perpetual: there is no return. A man is accountable to no person for his doings. Every man may reign secure in his petty tyranny, and spread terror and desolation around him. In the third place, a person with this writ, in the day time, may enter all houses, shops, etc., at will, and command all to assist him. . . . Now, one of the most essential branches of English liberty is the freedom of one's house. . . . This writ, if it should be declared legal, would totally annihilate this privilege. Custom-house officers may enter our houses when they please. . . . Their menial servants may enter, may break locks, bars, and everything in their way; and whether they break, through malice or revenge, no man, no court, can enquire. . . . Thus, reason and the constitution are both against this writ. Let us see what authority there is for it. Not more than one instance can be found in all our law-books; and that was in the zenith of arbitrary power, namely, in the reign of Charles II., when star-chamber powers were pushed to extremity by some ignorant clerk of the exchequer. But had this writ been in any book whatever, it would have been illegal. All precedents are under the control of the princi-

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throughout the whole British empire. The playfulness of Thackeray's comment, some fifty years ago, on the famous saying of young George III., should not keep us from seeing how shrewdly it penetrates into the inner truth of history: "Our chief troubles began when we got a king who gloried in the name of Briton, and being born in the country, proposed to rule it." "The Four Georges," 39.

ples of law. Lord Talbot says it is better to observe these than any precedents. . . . No acts of parliament can establish such a writ. . . . An act against the constitution is void." [1]

These sentences, being a part of some notes taken on the spot by a young lawyer who was eagerly watching the scene,[2] can give probably but a faint idea of the intellectual range and force of an argument which occupied four or five hours in the delivery, which exhibited great learning and acuteness, and which constantly presented the subject as having relations infinitely larger and more solemn than the particular topic out of which it grew, showing, as its reporter testifies, "not only the illegality of the writ, its insidious and mischievous tendency, but . . . the views and designs of Great Britain, in taxing us, of destroying our charters, and assuming the powers of our government, legislative, executive, and judicial, external and internal, civil and ecclesiastical, temporal and spiritual; and all this . . . with such a profusion of learning, such convincing argument, and such a torrent of sublime and pathetic eloquence, that a great crowd of spectators and auditors went away absolutely electrified." [3]

And the witness, to whose somewhat exuberant memoranda we are indebted for the only original description we have of this great scene, and who was himself just entering upon his own sturdy career in the service of his country, seemed to the very end of his life to dwell with almost equal enthusiasm upon the splendor and power of Otis's oratory on that day, and upon the historic significance of the wonderful speech in which Otis thus exhibited it. "James Otis was Isaiah and Ezekiel united." [4] His speech

[1] J. Adams, "Works," ii. 523–525.

[2] Ibid. ii. 124 n. Also Horace Gray in App. to Quincy's "Mass. Reports," 479. The notes actually taken in the court room by John Adams seem to have been written out with care shortly afterward; and it is from these revised notes that I have quoted.

[3] J. Adams, "Works," x. 183.

[4] Ibid. 272.

was "in a style of oratory that I never heard equalled in this or any other country." [1] "Otis's oration against writs of assistance breathed into this nation the breath of life." [2] "Otis was a flame of fire! With a promptitude of classical allusions, a depth of research, a rapid summary of historical events and dates, a profusion of legal authorities, a prophetic glance of his eye into futurity, and a torrent of impetuous eloquence, he hurried away everything before him. American Independence was then and there born; the seeds of patriots and heroes were then and there sown. . . . Every man of a crowded audience appeared to me to go away, as I did, ready to take up arms against writs of assistance. Then and there was the first scene of the first act of opposition to the arbitrary claims of Great Britain." [3]

III.

At the time of making that speech, James Otis was six-and-thirty years old. After his graduation at Harvard, at the age of eighteen, he had spent a year and a half at home in the study of literature and philosophy; then, devoting himself to the law, he had begun its practice at Plymouth in 1748; after two years of residence there, he had removed to Boston, and in spite of his youth, he had quickly risen to the highest rank in his profession. In 1760, when he was five-and-thirty years old and had been for twelve years in the full tide of a laborious law-practice, he proved his continued devotion to fine literary studies by publishing without his name a book entitled "The Rudiments of Latin Prosody; with a Dissertation on Letters and the Principles

[1] J. Adams, "Works," x. 362.

[2] Ibid. 276.

[3] Ibid. 247–248. This characteristic bit of declamation by John Adams has perhaps been taken too literally and too seriously by some writers, as by W. V. Wells, who in his "Life of Samuel Adams," i. 44, has tried to show that Otis's speech "was not the prologue of the great drama." See, also, William Wirt Henry, "Life, Corr., and Speeches of Patrick Henry," i. 102.

of Harmony in Poetic and Prosaic Composition,"—a book of minute and precise textual scholarship,—a book which shows that its author's natural aptitude for eloquence, oral and written, had been developed in connection with the most careful technical study of details. No one would guess, in reading that book, that it was written by perhaps the busiest lawyer and politician in New England. It seems rather to be the production of some clever and painful classical professor, and to have been born of the cloistered leisure of a college. Indeed, so deep was the satisfaction of James Otis in these tranquil studies,—as a relief, doubtless, from the rough contentions of his public life,—that he wrote a similar treatise on "The Rudiments of Greek Prosody," —which, however, was never printed, but perished in the general conflagration that, by his own hand, overtook all his papers near the close of his life.

Throughout his whole career, he held to his early love of the Roman and Greek classics, particularly of Homer; while in English his literary taste was equally robust and wholesome. At a time when some of his American and English contemporaries were surrendering themselves to the weak and imitative graces of that brood of small poets then chirping in England,—as Shenstone, William Whitehead, Akenside, Beattie,—this New England lawyer protested against the tendency, and pointed away to the true masters of English verse. To a young man, a kinsman and a namesake of his own, in whose education he took a special interest, Otis wrote of certain Americans as being then "very fond of talking about poetry, and repeating passages of it. The poets they quote I know nothing of; but do you take care, James, that you don't give in to this folly. If you want to read poetry, read Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, and Pope, and throw all the rest in the fire. These are all that are worth reading." [1]

Yet with all Otis's soundness of taste as a student of literature, he often seemed wholly lacking in taste when he

[1] Tudor, "The Life of James Otis," 16–17.

himself came to the act of literary composition. He was a powerful writer, and he wrote much; but in the structure and form of what he wrote, there are few traces of that enthusiasm for classical literature which we know him to have possessed. Perhaps his nature was too harsh, too passionate and ill-balanced, to yield to the culture even of a literary perfection which he could fully recognize and enjoy in others. He was, above all things, an orator; and his oratory was of the tempestuous kind—bold, vehement, irregular, overpowering. When he took pen in hand, he was an orator still; and the habit of extemporaneous, impetuous, and reckless expression which he had long indulged in at the bar, controlled him at his desk. In writing upon any subject of controversy, he seemed to storm across his own pages in mighty rage, even as he had been accustomed to pace stormily up and down before a jury; to throw to the winds all the classic virtues in expression,—temperance, order, lucidity; to catch at bold allusions, flaming images, grotesque comparisons; and to leave unrevised upon the paper, and in all its original extravagance and inaccuracy, whatsoever in the fury of composition he had once flung down upon it. He seemed even to despise the correction of his own work, perhaps to be incapable of it. Thus, having on one occasion composed, on behalf of the house of representatives of Massachusetts, some very elaborate and very important state-papers, which had been afterward carefully revised and corrected by his political compeer, Samuel Adams, Otis said at the time, in his jocular fashion,—"I have drawn them all up, and given them to Sam to 'quieuwhew' them,"[1]—an indispensable literary process which, however it may be described, his own writings generally showed abundant proofs of lacking. And thus it came about, that the man whose taste in reading was so severely

[1] J. Adams, "Works," x. 367; Tudor, "Life of Otis," 316–317. It is not necessary to my present purpose to determine just what the papers were which Otis thus claimed to have written. See important note by W. V. Wells, in his "Life of Samuel Adams," i. 172–174.

classic, was often in his own writing an unrestrained barbarian. Disproportion, incoherence, exaggeration, coarseness, inaccuracy—these are faults not uncommon in his pages; and along with these, was a certain wildness of manner which early brought upon him, especially in England, the imputation of madness.

But great as are the literary blemishes upon Otis's work, that work is still full of power. Even its style, with all its Gothic irregularity and intemperance, is always vivid and significant,—at times, it is impressive to an extraordinary degree. His learning on many subjects was considerable, even if disorderly; and he had instant command over the resources of his own memory. He had, moreover, the ability to grasp quickly all the principles and facts of a given case, to pierce to the core of them, and to perceive the logic which controlled them; and even while pressing forward in his track along a zigzag path of his own choosing, and with many a wide and dangerous sweep of digression, he yet never lost sight of the logical goal which he had set out to reach. In his pamphlets, too, as in his speeches, he gave free rein to his enjoyment of humor, and to his uncommon faculty of sarcasm. A serious discomfiture of his opponent was never quite enough to appease his ambition in debate: he must also cover his antagonist with ridicule, and drive him from the field amid shouts of derision.

IV.

Otis's speech against writs of assistance made him at once a leader of public opinion in New England respecting the constitutional rights of the colonies, even as it vastly increased the public sensitiveness respecting official encroachments upon those rights. In the following year, 1762, occurred a series of events which still further intensified that sensitiveness, and gave to Otis the occasion for the first of those powerful controversial pamphlets, to which he owes his great place in the political literature of the Revolution.

It is interesting to note that, fully three years before the thirteen colonies were aroused by the Stamp-Act to an alarmed consideration of their constitutional rights in the matter of taxation, Otis was the hero of a little struggle in the single colony of Massachusetts, in which he had the opportunity of rehearsing in miniature the part he was to take in the larger subsequent struggle involving the whole continent; and to fix clearly in his own mind the logical formula under which, in protecting the rights of Massachusetts, the rights of all America were to be protected. "It shows in a strong light," as John Adams thought, "the heaves and throes of the burning mountain, three years at least before the explosion of the volcano in Massachusetts or Virginia."[1] In an emergency of considerable public danger, but at a time when the colonial legislature was not in session, Governor Bernard, with the advice of the council, had assumed authority to fit out an armed vessel, thereby incurring an expense not expressly provided for by the house of representatives. A few years before that time, such an act on the part of the governor would perhaps have been crowned with the public gratitude, or at any rate would have been passed over without disapproval. It denotes the alert and even the inflamed condition of the public mind respecting the barriers of prerogative, that at its next session the house of representatives, led on by Otis, boldly confronted the governor with its stern expostulation:— "Justice to ourselves and to our constituents obliges us to remonstrate against the method of making or increasing establishments by the governor and council. It is in effect taking from the house their most darling privilege, the right of originating all taxes. It is, in short, annihilating one branch of the legislature. And when once the representatives of a people give up this privilege, the government will soon become arbitrary. No necessity, therefore, can be sufficient to justify a house of representatives in giving up such a privilege; for it would be of little consequence to the

[1] "Works," x. 300.

people whether they were subject to George, or Louis, the king of Great Britain, or the French king, if both were arbitrary, as both would be, if both could levy taxes without parliament." [1]

On the very same day on which this bold address was sent to the governor, it was returned by him to the house, with a message earnestly entreating that body not to enter upon its minutes the words in which the "sacred and well-beloved name" of the king was "so disrespectfully brought into question." Upon the reading of this message, and in the midst of great excitement, and with cries of "raze them," "raze them," the house voted to expunge the "dreadful words under which his excellency" had "placed a black mark." But, as the governor still persisted in the claim that his course, in incurring expense not authorized by the legislature, was justifiable, the house appointed a committee to present to the public a more careful view of its own position. Of this committee, Otis was a member; and performing alone the work which had been assigned to the committee, he published, in the autumn of 1762, "A Vindication of the Conduct of the House of Representatives of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay: more particularly in the Last Session of the General Assembly."

V.

The importance of this pamphlet is very great, as illustrating both the intellectual traits of James Otis and the development in America of clear thought and of keen anxiety respecting the constitutional rights of the colonies. In the opinion of a critic inclined, certainly, to set its full value on any performance of Otis, this brochure "may be considered the original source, from which all subsequent arguments against taxation were derived." [2] The exas-

[1] The message of the house, from which these sentences are taken, was of course written by Otis. "A Vindication of the Conduct," etc., 15; also, Tudor, "Life of Otis," 119–120.

[2] Tudor, "Life of Otis," 122.

perating candor of the pamphlet, as well as the sting deftly concealed in many an insinuation along its pages, is not unfairly suggested even by the rhymed motto which confronts us on the title-page:

> "Let such, such only, tread this sacred floor,
> Who dare to love their country and—be poor:
> Or, good though rich, humane and wise though great,—
> Jove give but these, we 've nought to fear from fate."

Passing over details which are of no permanent interest, we find that Otis here bases his whole argument on certain general propositions as to human rights, which it is perhaps startling to see thus bluntly proclaimed in the colonies so early as in 1762: "1. God made all men naturally equal. 2. The ideas of earthly superiority, pre-eminence, and grandeur are educational;—at least acquired, not innate. 3. Kings were,—and plantation governors should be,—made for the good of the people, and not the people for them. 4. No government has a right to make hobby-horses, asses, and slaves of the subjects, nature having made sufficient of the two former, . . . but none of the last,—which infallibly proves they are unnecessary. 5. Though most governments are 'de facto' arbitrary, and consequently the curse and scandal of human nature, yet none are 'de jure' arbitrary. 6. The British constitution of government as now established in his majesty's person and family, is the wisest and best in the world. 7. The king of Great Britain is the best as well as most glorious monarch upon the globe, and his subjects the happiest in the universe. 8. It is most humbly presumed, the king would have all his plantation governors follow his royal example, in a wise and strict adherence to the principles of the British constitution, by which, in conjunction with his other royal virtues, he is enabled to reign in the hearts of a brave and generous, free and loyal people. 9. This is the summit, the 'ne plus ultra,' of human glory and felicity. 10. The French king

is a despotic arbitrary prince, and consequently his subjects are very miserable." [1]

Thus, even in the construction of a constitutional argument, James Otis reveals the habit of his mind, wherein gravity and frolic, logic and sarcasm, all rush together for expression. And the entire pamphlet is but an amplification of the ideas and the feelings which color these words, —an avowal of loyalty to the king so hyperbolical as to suggest its dangerous nearness to irony, a robust assertion of colonial rights under the British constitution, all blended with mirthful and contemptuous allusions to any man who should deny or qualify those rights. Everywhere he stands for the freeman's privilege of plain speech in the discussion of matters relating to the state: "The province can be in no danger from a house of representatives daring to speak plain English, when they are complaining of a grievance." [2] And he never lets his readers lose sight of the greatness of the principle at the bottom of all their petty altercations with provincial governors wanting to be despots; declaring, for instance, that if the doctrine then insisted on by Governor Bernard in Massachusetts had "prevailed in England, we should have heard nothing of the oppressions and misfortunes of the Charleses and the Jameses; the Revolution would never have taken place; the genius of William the Third would have languished in the fens of Holland, or evaporated in the plains of Flanders; the names of the three Georges would doubtless have been immortal,—but Great Britain, to this day, might have been in chains and darkness, unblessed with their influence." [3]

Certainly, the interest attaching to this pamphlet will not be diminished by a remembrance of its relation to the entire body of political literature produced in America during the subsequent twenty years. "How many volumes," exclaimed John Adams, with some characteristic exaggera-

[1] "A Vindication of the Conduct," etc., 17–21.

[2] Ibid. 25.

[3] Ibid. 44–45.

tion, " are concentrated in this little fugitive pamphlet, the production of a few hurried hours, amidst the continual solicitations of a crowd of clients ! . . . Look over the declaration of rights and wrongs issued by congress in 1774. Look into the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Look into the writings of Doctor Price and Doctor Priestley. Look into all the French constitutions of government; and, to cap the climax, look into Mister Thomas Paine's ' Common Sense,' ' Crisis,' and ' Rights of Man.' What can you find that is not to be found, in solid substance, in this ' Vindication of the House of Representatives ' ? " [1]

VI.

Thus far in his career, this protagonist for colonial rights had grappled only with the subordinate and local agents of the English government,—with such small foemen as custom-house officers, provincial judges, and colonial governors, all of whom he was at liberty to treat as though they misrepresented the benignant and free spirit which he adroitly assumed as the commanding trait, not only of the British empire, but of its king and of its king's ministers. Behind this pleasant fiction, however, he was not long permitted to conduct the controversy. The new zeal of English officers in America had been the result of a new and a sterner policy on the part of the government in England; and by the middle of the year 1764, Otis found it necessary to look beyond the petty colonial agents and consignees of the imperial authority, and to address his appeals directly to that authority itself.

For by that time, the evidence had become irresistible in the colonies that England had entered upon a new and a much more thorough system of colonial administration. Early in the previous year, she had concluded with France that proud treaty, whereby she received from her ancient enemy an enormous enlargement of her territorial posses-

[1] " Works," x. 310–311.

sions in America. Under all the circumstances, it was but natural, it was but right, that England should think that at last the time had come for an entire readjustment of her somewhat loose, irregular, and unbusiness-like relations to those American possessions, particularly with the view of making them contribute some substantial help to the general cost of the empire, in the benefits of which they all participated. For many years, acts of parliament had been nominally in force in the colonies, imposing duties on the importation of various articles of common use; but from all these sources of revenue, and along with an outlay of more than seven thousand pounds a year for its collection, the treasury had received only an insignificant sum,—on an average of thirty years, less than nineteen hundred pounds sterling a year.[1] Up and down the entire coast of America, the revenue laws had been notoriously evaded, with the corrupt connivance, in many cases, of the very officers who had been appointed to execute them.

This state of things was to continue no longer. A comprehensive scheme of colonial reconstruction was to be drawn out. The laws of parliament for the procurement of a revenue from America were to be strictly enforced; and new laws were to be passed providing for a still larger revenue. All persons concerned in the collection of customs were to be ordered to their posts; their numbers were to be increased; more stringent instructions were to be given to them; all who faltered in duty were to be dismissed. Moreover, the governors of colonies, and all other officers there, civil, military, or naval, were to co-operate in the execution of the new system, the efficiency of which, likewise, was to be still further strengthened by the establishment of new courts of admiralty.

All these tokens of a change in policy had been instantly noted by Otis and by other sagacious American observers, and had produced throughout the colonies no little uneasi-

[1] "The Regulations lately made concerning the Colonies," 57. This pamphlet was inspired, if not actually written, by George Grenville.

ness, when, in the early summer of 1764, news arrived which seemed to justify their gloomiest apprehensions. An act had just passed,—so it was announced,—not only retaining but even enlarging, the old duties and restrictions on trade to and from America; for example, laying new and larger imposts on foreign wines, molasses, and sugar. But this was not the worst. In all former acts of this kind, the purpose of deriving a revenue from the colonies by authority of parliament, had been mercifully veiled under the pretext of simply regulating the trade of the empire. Now, all disguises were thrown off. For the first time in the history of English legislation, it was plainly mentioned in an act of parliament that the raising of a revenue from the colonies, by its direct authority, was the chief intent of the act.[1] And even this was not the worst. "These new taxes," wrote one of the secretaries of the treasury, "will certainly not be sufficient to defray that share of the American expense which America ought, and is able, to bear. Others must be added."[2] Among those others loomed, at that moment, the dark and sinister shape of the Stamp Act.

This latter measure, which proved to be of so mighty an import to America, to England, and to mankind, it had been the original purpose of the ministry to press upon the attention of the house of commons at its spring session in 1764; but in a spirit of politic forbearance, they had con-

[1] For the resolutions of the committee of ways and means, during the session from 8 December, 1763, to 19 April, 1764, embodying these plans for regulating and increasing taxes upon the colonies, see Hansard "Parl. Hist. of Eng.," xv. 1425–1434. The chief legal result of these resolutions was the act passed during that session, and containing in its preamble these epoch-making words: "Whereas it is expedient that new provisions and regulations should be established for improving the revenue of this kingdom, and for extending and securing the navigation and commerce between Great Britain and your majesty's dominions in America, which, by the peace, have been so happily enlarged; and whereas it is just and necessary, that a revenue be raised, in your majesty's said dominions in America, for defraying the expenses of defending, protecting, and securing the same," etc., 4 George III. c. 15. "Statutes at Large," ix. 152–161.

[2] Quoted in Bancroft, "Hist. of U. S.," last rev., iii. 73.

tented themselves with giving notice of their intention to bring in such a measure at the next session of parliament, in the following year.[1]

VII.

The significance of all these acts of the home government, no man in America saw more clearly than did James Otis; and it was in July, 1764, in the midst of the general anxiety caused by the news of them, that he published his gravest and most elaborate pamphlet, "The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved."[2]

Of all his political writings, this is the most sedate. It has even a tone of solemnity. It is as if he then realized that the logical movement of the controversy in which he had become involved, was rapidly sweeping him onward to a position of appalling responsibility; from which soon there would be no path of retreat; in which he would have to deal no longer with local politicians and the subordinate tools of power, but with the king of England himself, the peers and commons of England, the whole illimitable might of the British empire at that moment victorious beyond all modern precedent. Thus, James Otis pauses in his career; reviews the situation; reconsiders the grounds of his political faith; measures his own relation to the impending contest; strengthens his fortitude by the renewed assurance that the principles on which he had planted himself were sound, and that the course of action which they demanded of him, whether or not it should prove to be safe, was at least right. Hence, it happens that this pamphlet has unwonted sobriety; few humorous or grotesque passages; few bursts of passion; in many places a moderation of tone almost judicial. Indeed, its moderation of tone, at the time, gave considerable offense to some of his own asso-

[1] Hansard, "Parl. Hist. of Eng.," xv. 1427.

[2] Advertised in "The Boston Gazette" for 23 July, 1764, as published that day.

ciates. The pamphlet was said to have satisfied nobody. Yet it gave food for thought to everybody; and it is the one work of Otis on which rests his reputation as a serious political thinker.

It was impossible for him to find a basis for his theory of immediate political duty, except in some clear system of fundamental political thought. In trying to ascertain the rights of the British colonies, he was driven back to a fresh study of the primary rights of man; and thus his tract on the relations between the British colonies and the British parliament, becomes in some sense an institute of politics. It may be said to fall into three portions: the origin of government, the nature and rights of colonies in general, and the nature and rights of the British colonies in particular.

In the first place, he holds that government is founded, not on grace, nor on force, nor on compact, nor on property, but on the will of God as expressed in the necessities of human nature; hence, that "an original, supreme, sovereign, absolute, and uncontrollable earthly power must exist in and preside over every society, from whose final decisions there can be no appeal but directly to heaven. It is, therefore, originally and ultimately in the people; . . . and they never did in fact freely, nor can they rightfully, make an absolute, unlimited renunciation of this divine right. It is ever in the nature of the thing given in trust, and on a condition the performance of which no mortal can dispense with, namely, that the person or persons on whom the sovereignty is conferred by the people, shall incessantly consult their good. Tyranny of all kinds is to be abhorred, whether it be in the hands of one, or of the few, or of the many."[1]

In the second place, as regards the nature and rights of colonies in general, he affirms that a colony is neither an alien nor a menial member of the empire to which it belongs; that it is "a settlement of subjects in a territory disjointed

[1] "The Rights of the British Colonies," etc., 12–13.

or remote from the mother country" [1]; that modern colonists "are the noble discoverers and settlers of a new world, from whence, as from an endless source, wealth and plenty, the means of power, grandeur, and glory, in a degree unknown to the hungry chiefs of former ages, have been pouring into Europe for three hundred years past"; that "those colonies have received from the several states of Europe, except from Great Britain, . . . nothing but ill-usage, slavery, and chains, as fast as the riches of their own earning could furnish the means of forging them" [2]; but that they "are entitled to as ample rights, liberties, and privileges as the subjects of the mother country are, and in some respects to more." [3]

When he comes, in the third place, to speak of the nature and rights of the British colonies, he insists upon a distinction in their favor, founded on the august superiority of the English constitution in its historic developments and achievements on behalf of human liberty. Whatever may be the case with the colonies of other nations, the colonies of England, because they are the colonies of England, can wear no badge of political servitude: the possession of full political rights belongs to their lineage. "I think I have heard it said, that when the Dutch are asked why they enslave their colonies, their answer is, that the liberty of Dutchmen is confined to Holland, and that it was never intended for provincials in America, or anywhere else. A sentiment this,—very worthy of modern Dutchmen; but if their brave and worthy ancestors had entertained such narrow ideas of liberty, seven poor and distressed provinces would never have asserted their rights against the whole Spanish monarchy. . . . It is to be hoped none of our fellow-subjects of Britain, great or small, have borrowed this Dutch maxim of plantation politics. If they have, they had better return it from whence it came; indeed they

[1] "The Rights of the British Colonies," 38.
[2] Ibid. 37.
[3] Ibid. 38.

had. Modern Dutch or French maxims of state never will suit with a British constitution." [1]

Therefore, he insists that the rights of the British colonies are based especially on the large and free principles of the British constitution; that those principles were in force before any charters for British colonies were given, and will remain in force after all those charters shall have been annulled; that in the latter case, the colonists would still "be men, citizens, and British subjects" [2]; that every British subject, anywhere in the dominions of Great Britain, "is by the law of God and nature, by the common law, and by act of parliament . . . entitled to all the natural, essential, inherent, and inseparable rights of our fellow-subjects in Great Britain" [3]; that all the colonies "are subject to and dependent on Great Britain" [4]; that the parliament of Great Britain, as the supreme legislature of the empire, "has an undoubted power and lawful authority to make acts for the general good, that, by naming them, shall and ought to be equally binding as upon the subjects of Great Britain within the realm" [5]; that no legislature, "supreme or subordinate, has a right to make itself arbitrary"; that the supreme legislature "cannot take from any man any part of his property without his consent in person or by representation" [6]; "that no parts of his majesty's dominions can be taxed without their consent; that every part has a right to be represented in the supreme or some subordinate legislature; that the refusal of this would seem to be a contradiction in practice to the theory of the constitution; that the colonies are subordinate dominions, and are now in such a state as to make it best, for the good of the whole, that they should not only be continued in the enjoyment of subordinate legislation, but be also represented, in some proportion to their number and estates, in the grand legislative of the nation; that this would firmly unite all parts of the British empire in the

[1] "The Rights of the British Colonies," 58.
[2] Ibid. 50. [3] Ibid. 52. [4] Ibid. 49. [5] Ibid. [6] Ibid. 55.

greatest peace and prosperity, and render it invulnerable and perpetual." [1]

VIII.

Thus, the real object of Otis in this powerful pamphlet was not to bring about a revolution, but to avert one. There can be no doubt of the sincerity of his protestations of loyalty to England, on behalf of himself and of his fellow-colonists:—"We all think ourselves happy under Great Britain. We love, esteem, and reverence our mother-country, and adore our king. And could the choice of independency be offered the colonies, or subjection to Great Britain upon any terms above absolute slavery, I am convinced they would accept the latter. The ministry, in all future generations, may rely on it, that British America will never prove undutiful, till driven to it, as the last fatal resort against ministerial oppression, which will make the wisest mad, and the weakest strong." [2]

To prevent so awful a catastrophe, therefore, Otis implores the government of England to recognize the colonies as in normal relations to the British constitution, and as entitled to some participation in that imperial council of the empire, by which the pecuniary burdens of the empire are distributed. Granting this, the disasters that now darken the horizon, and fill all hearts with dread, will forever sink out of sight.

But while the actual purpose of this pamphlet was to avert a revolution, its actual effect was to furnish the starting-point for the entire movement of revolutionary reasoning, by which some two millions of people were to justify themselves in the years to come, as they advanced along their rugged and stormy path toward Independence. It became for a time one of the legal text-books of the opponents of the ministry; it was a law-arsenal, from which other combatants, on that side, drew some of their best

[1] "The Rights of the British Colonies," 99. [2] Ibid. 77.

weapons. It expounded, with perfect clearness, even if with some shrinking, the constitutional philosophy of the whole subject; and it gave to the members of a conservative and a law-respecting race, a conservative and a lawful pretext for resisting law, and for revolutionizing the government.[1]

IX.

Not far from the middle of the month of September, 1764, —nearly two months, therefore, after Otis's blood-warm pamphlet had set out on its journey into the world,—there came from the press in Boston another and a quieter pamphlet, entitled "The Sentiments of a British American,"[2] written by Oxenbridge Thacher, one of Otis's associates at the Boston bar. Born about forty-four years before that date, a graduate of Harvard in the class of 1738, he had begun his career by taking up the hereditary vocation of the family—that of the ministry; but lacking strength of voice and a robust frame, he had failed to win in the pulpit that success which, according to one of his ministerial contemporaries,[3] is often attained by those "who have only the sounding brass to give them a reputation."

At the bar, to which he went with much reluctance, he soon attained a distinguished position, on account of his learning, acuteness, good sense, and the gravity and stainless probity of his character. Whatever quietness of manner

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[1] In the same year in which this pamphlet of Otis's was published, there appeared in Boston a new edition of Wood's "New England Prospect," with a somewhat remarkable preface in which were freely discussed the troubled relations between the colonies and the mother-country. This preface was declared by James Bowdoin to have been written by Otis; and Robert C. Winthrop has presented some considerations in support of that view. "Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc.," vi. 250–251. From internal evidence, however, it seems to me altogether unlikely that Otis was the author of the preface, which, probably, was the work of Nathaniel Rogers, A.M., of Harv., 1762. Pref. to Wood's "N. E. Prosp.," ed. 1865, p. ix.

[2] Advertised in the "Boston Gazette" for September 17, 1764, as then just published.

[3] J. Eliot, "Biog. Dict.," 454.

he may have had in act or speech was due to no lassitude of conviction on any subject; for within that fragile and invalided form there glowed a fiery spirit, intense in opinion, jealous and anxious for the right, and ready at any cost to contend against the arms or the arts of evil—or of what he took to be evil. Three or four years before the time at which he is here introduced to the reader, he had written for one of the newspapers a series of articles on an exciting matter of local interest; and these articles had been gathered up into a pamphlet, published in Boston in 1761 under the title of "Considerations on Lowering the Value of Gold Coins within the Province of Massachusetts Bay." That, apparently, had been his sole literary achievement prior to 1764.

A larger, a more difficult, a more impassioned subject he next took in hand, when, in that year, brooding over the approach of a mistaken and a disastrous parliamentary policy toward the colonies, he spread before readers both American and British "The Sentiments of a British American": a calm, well-reasoned, manly, lawyer-like argument against the new measures of the imperial government; with no flourishes or tumults of speech; with not a touch of brilliance; most sincere in tone, most conciliatory; almost pathetic, likewise, in its tenderness of love and reverence for England. If we would now seize the very essence of the best American thought in its earliest stage of dissent from the new and firmer policy of the empire, we must at least glance at the outline of this argument by Oxenbridge Thacher.

A nation in great prosperity, thus his argument begins, should be on its guard against the special dangers which are apt to follow from great prosperity. Great Britain is now "arrived to a height of glory and wealth which no European nation hath ever reached since the decline of the Roman empire." This prosperity is in part due to its colonies, which, therefore, have a special claim to be taken into account in the development of imperial plans. No people

on earth are more jealous of their rights than the British people. The American colonists are a part of the British people—not their "mere property." It is assumed that the British parliament intends to be just to the British colonies. The enquiry, therefore, is,—whether the British parliament, by its recent act "for granting certain duties in the British colonies . . . in America," has overstepped the line of justice toward those colonies.

To this act of parliament, there are five objections,—the first four affecting British subjects in America, the fifth affecting British subjects everywhere, particularly in Great Britain.

First, it is a tax,—a tax laid on the colonies without the consent of their representatives; and, in addition to that, a tax of peculiar hardship, because the colonies have already to bear a tax in support of their own subordinate governments. Nor is this objection removed by saying that the colonies, now enjoying the benefits accruing to them from the late war with France, ought also to share in the burdens which that war has entailed: for the war has been of no less benefit to Great Britain; while the war lasted, the colonies contributed to it their full proportion; by its territorial acquisitions, they are not particular gainers; Great Britain is a great gainer by them.

Secondly, the act gives an alarming extension to the courts of admiralty in America, subverting and abolishing many of the ancient rights of Englishmen under the common law.

Thirdly, the act gives to the commanders of the king's ships in American waters dangerous authority over the persons and the goods of British subjects there.

Fourthly, the act gives to all officers of the government in America, on land and sea, extraordinary powers, but without the usual checks of English law against the wanton and unjust exercise of those powers.

Fifthly, as this act imperils the interest of British subjects in America, so does it imperil the interests of British sub-

jects in Great Britain. What spectacle is now produced before the eyes of men? It is the spectacle of "a million and a half of British subjects disfranchised, or put under regulations alien from our happy constitution." And what pretense may not this "afford to after ministers to treat the inhabitants of the island itself after the same manner!"[1] Nevertheless, upon this aspect of danger to England we do not now insist; nor upon the ultimate damage which must fall upon England merely from the "alienation of the affections" of her American children. This, however, we do insist upon: the immediate, material damage to the commercial interests of England through her retention and development of this new policy toward her colonies. For the greatest interest of England to-day is her colonial trade. But on what does her colonial trade depend? Of course, it depends on the ability of the colonies to pay her for what they buy of her. The effect of this new legislation, however, will be to force the colonies to stop buying of England, merely by taking from them the commercial facilities under which they have hitherto acquired the means of paying England. Henceforth, either they will manufacture their own goods, or they will go without them. In any case, England will have lost her best customers, and her chief trade will be ruined.

"These," says Oxenbridge Thacher, at last, as he brings his noble argument to a still nobler close, "are the sentiments of a British American, which he ventures to expose to the public, with an honest, well-meant freedom. Born in one of the colonies, and descended from ancestors who were among the first planters of that colony, he is not ashamed to avow a love to the country that gave him birth; yet he hath ever exulted in the name of Briton. He hath ever thought all the inhabitants in the remotest dominions of Great Britain interested in the wealth, the prosperity, and the glory of the capital. And he desireth ever to retain these filial sentiments. . . . He concludes all with his

[1] "The Sentiments," etc., 12.

most ardent wishes, that the happy island of Great Britain may grow in wealth, in power and glory, to yet greater degrees; that the conquests it makes over foreign enemies may serve the more to protect the internal liberties of its subjects; that her colonies, now happily extended, may grow in filial affection and dutiful submission to her, their mother; and that she, in return, may never forget her parental affections; that the whole English empire, united by the strongest bands of love and interest, formidable to the tyrants and oppressors of the earth, may retain its own virtue, and happily possess immortality." [1]

X.

These two pamphlets,—the one by Otis, the other by Thacher,—may fairly be said to give us the attitude of patriotic American lawyers and politicians in the year 1764, toward the new colonial policy of the British government, —a policy which, as was natural, they viewed chiefly in its political and legal aspects. At about the time when these pamphlets were published in New England, in the Middle Colonies were published two other pamphlets, which should have great interest for us, as exhibiting the attitude of large-minded American merchants toward the same colonial policy, which, as was natural, they viewed chiefly in its industrial and commercial aspects.

The first of these pamphlets, entitled "An Essay on the Trade of the Northern Colonies of Great Britain in North America," was printed in Philadelphia in 1764, and was reprinted in London before the close of the year.[2] Quiet and conversational in tone, pure in style, free from the pet-

[1] "The Sentiments," etc., 16.

[2] I have used the London reprint, belonging to the library of Harvard University. I do not remember to have met with the original Philadelphia edition, which is mentioned on the title-page of the London edition. It appears to have been seen by Hildeburn: "Issues of the Pennsylvania Press," ii. 12.

tiness of provincial sentiment, and from every trace of asperity or harshness, it applies to British colonial policy the test of broad commercial considerations; and working out the argument with great practical knowledge, with ingenuity, candor, and force, it shows that the industrial interests of the whole British empire, and the prosperity of all British subjects, would be improved by taking off, rather than increasing, these tax-restrictions on the American colonial trade.

The second pamphlet, similar to the first in purpose and tone, but still stronger in execution, is entitled "Some Thoughts on the Method of Improving and Securing the Advantages which accrue to Great Britain from the Northern Colonies."[1] It was first published in a New York newspaper probably in August, 1764, whence it was republished in London in the following year. Containing no allusion to the proposal of a Stamp Act, with no mention even of the revenue law of April, 1764, with no denial of the right of parliament to tax the Americans, it deals only with the impolicy of all such measures,—their impolicy as affecting the practical interests of the whole empire and of every member of it.

The writer takes his stand at that point of time in the previous year, when, with inexpressible loyalty and delight, the American colonies heard of the Treaty of Paris whereby Great Britain had come into possession of all the vast American domain claimed by France east of the Mississippi River. In the presence of this stupendous success, two questions spring up:—first, how shall these American possessions, the old and the new, be secured to Great Britain? —and, secondly, how shall they be improved to her greatest advantage?

[1] I have used the London edition, also belonging to the Harvard library. The preface states that it is a reprint from the "New York Mercury." A pencilled inscription in the pamphlet states that George Bancroft considered it as the work of Mauduit. This must be a mistake; since the doctrine of the pamphlet is the opposite of that held by Mauduit as regards parliamentary taxation.

The first question is easily answered. From external attack, these colonies are secured by the fleet of Britain; and from the loss of them through internal revolt, she is secured by the fact, that she gives them no motive for such revolt: "History does not furnish an instance of a revolt begun by the people, which did not take its rise from oppression." "As we are sure Britain will not oppress her colonies, and it is evident that nothing else can give them either power or inclination to rebel, we may safely conclude that they will remain steadfastly and firmly united to her, and by contributing to her wealth and power, continue to increase their own security, and that dependence which they esteem their happiness, and which carries with it so many real advantages." [1]

The answer to the second question is equally clear, although it involves considerations then less familiar. The colonies can be made to yield the greatest commercial advantage to Great Britain, by being permitted to acquire the greatest commercial prosperity for themselves. Not by taxing them, but by buying of them and selling to them, will the mother country make them most profitable to herself; and the more the colonies have to sell, the more will they have to buy, and the more will they have with which to pay for what they buy. Of such commercial prosperity, what is the essential condition? It is freedom. Why is it that the northern colonies, though under a stern climate and upon a hard soil, should already have yielded so immense a profit to the mother country? "This has no other cause, but that which made Rome the mistress of the world, gave grandeur, riches, and power to Venice, and at present constitutes the glory of Britain—liberty!" [2] "I will conclude all with this observation . . . that Britain, by being contented with all her colonies can yield—which may be obtained by a wise regulation of their trade—will found the greatest empire in the world, and such a one

[1] "Some Thoughts," etc., 9–10.

[2] Ibid., 15.

as her American subjects will ever find it their truest interest to support." [1]

Upon the whole, it may be said of this wise and most persuasive presentation, in 1764, of the American view as to British colonial policy, that had the brain of George Grenville and of George the Third been capable of absorbing it, there would have been no American Revolution.

[1] "Some Thoughts," etc., 23.

CHAPTER III.

UNDER THE MENACE OF THE STAMP ACT: NOVEMBER, 1774–APRIL, 1765.

I.—The notification of a Stamp Act at first obscured in America by the tax-legislation just before enacted—The public anxiety at last converges upon the proposed measure—A token of this change, in the "Dream of the Branding of Horses and Asses."

II.—"The Rights of Colonies," by Stephen Hopkins, Governor of Rhode Island, December, 1764—His character and career—Outline of his pamphlet—Its moderation of tone—Its great influence in America and England.

III.—The American argument tainted by the heresy of Nullification—Assault upon this heresy by "A Gentleman at Halifax," February, 1765—Range and method of this first Loyalist pamphleteer.

IV.—Bitter controversy provoked by the Halifax Gentleman—Otis's attack upon him in his "Vindication of the British Colonies against the Aspersions of the Halifax Gentleman"—Rejoinder in "A Defence of the Letter from a Gentleman at Halifax," April, 1765.

V.—Otis's parting shot, in his "Brief Remarks."

VI.—The Halifax Gentleman identified as Martin Howard, of Newport—His career and character—His flight from Newport after receiving outrage from a mob.

I.

THE several writings thus far mentioned as products of the year 1764, are among the earliest manifestations, in literary form, of American disfavor toward the new taxing-policy of the government. A curious fact, however, attaches to all these writings. Though published weeks or even months after the official announcement of an intended Stamp Act, not one of them contains the slightest allusion to that measure; while, on the other hand, the actual passage, in April, 1764, of the act for deriving an imperial revenue from certain port-duties in the colonies, appears to be

the one fact over which the American people are invited to take alarm. Thus, as it seems, the American people, bewildered in the thicket of passing events, did not at first perceive their true relations and proportions. But, at about the time of the appearance of Thacher's pamphlet, that is, in the early autumn of 1764, the appalling significance of the notice of the Stamp Act began to dawn upon them; and then, almost at once, the centre of gravity shifted from the immediate past to the immediate future,—from the measure that had become a law in the preceding March, to the measure that might become a law in the following March.

One of the earliest tokens of this change in the direction of the public solicitude, is to be seen in a bit of comic writing, the humor of which was already characteristic of the American mind, then, as since then, not unwilling to veil its serious and even its angry and uncompliant moods under droll anecdotes and grimly ironical terms of ultra-submissiveness. In the leading newspaper of Rhode Island there appeared, on the tenth of November, 1764, a communication[1] purporting to be from a rough and ready colonist in humble circumstances, a man without any knowledge of books, as he says, excepting the Bible and Pilgrim's Progress. Not long before, he had sat up one evening with a neighbor of his till eleven o'clock, trying to make out the bearings of this queer news about "a stamping law"; and, parting from his friend no wiser than before their talk began, he went to bed, and, straightway falling asleep, he had this dream:—"Methought the stamp law ended in one for stamping all our beasts of burthen, and for that end a ship had arrived with the branding-master and his company, who soon after sent order to our town to have all such beasts within a proper enclosure on a certain day. And, accordingly, in the morning of the day, I fancied that I saw all

[1] For a carefully authenticated manuscript copy of this "Dream," taken from the files of the "Providence Gazette," I am indebted to Mr. W. E. Foster of that city. I became aware of the existence of this curious piece, through an allusion to it in one of the pamphlets of "The Halifax Gentleman," who, perhaps from mere rumor, attributes it to Stephen Hopkins.

the horses of the town brought together in a pasture of my neighbor's, that was fenced better than ordinary—the pound being too small—and amongst them were about a half a dozen asses, being all we had. Soon after, the brand-master with his retinue approached the pasture with great pomp, one carrying a large silver brand in the form of the letter S; and, upon entering the field, they began with the asses, and branded them without the least interruption. They then drew near to the horses, and would have laid hold on a stately bay horse; but, taking fright at the glittering of the brand, he snorted, kicked up his heels, and went off. I was sorry to see him fling the dirt into the gentleman's face; and the whole drove being struck with the same panic, they leapt the fence, and ran off snorting and flinging up their heels, so that I saw them no more. And whilst the branding-company stared, and expressed some surprise at what had happened, a very ragged country-fellow said, with a facetious grin, that he 'always understood, till then, that the good people of England very well knew that none but asses would stand still to be branded.'" In the ominous silence which followed this rustic taunt, a gentlemanlike person who stood holding by the bridle a powerful horse, was approached by one of the branding-company, who requested the loan of the horse that he might ride it to head off the drove. To this the gentleman politely assented, but at the same time advised the officer to remove his spurs—as the horse would not tolerate any rider so equipped; informing him at the same time, while he stooped down to unbuckle his spurs, that the drove of horses which he proposed to head off, would probably prove a little difficult to manage in that way,—since they "were all of the English breed, and the far greater part of them had for their sire and were descended from a very remarkable horse, known by the name of Old Noll, who, though he was not a showy beast, was firm and had courage, and might have been of great use but that his master fell in love with a huge pair of French spurs, and, contrary to all good

advice, must needs mount Noll with them upon his heels; but, unhappily, the horse no sooner felt the spurs at his sides, but he gave his master such a fall as broke his neck; upon which the breed were out of credit for a while, and being sent hither, multiplied exceedingly." Upon this discouraging information, the officer concluded not to accept the loan of the gentleman's horse; and, after various other methods of procedure had been discussed without avail, the leading man of the town ventured to give to the branding-master this bit of gentle counsel:—"'Have you never heard that branding is a mark of property? If the brand was once put on, I should not wonder if your next errand here was for the beasts—or their hides. Mutual confidence will give our master a better and more durable property in what we have, than any branding. But when distrust and diffidence comes in its stead, no good can ensue; opportunities will never be long wanting for masters to oppress their servants, or for servants to —— their masters.' Here, the whole of our company gave three huzzas, in approbation of our chief's discourse; in which I joined so heartily, that the good woman at my side gave me a hunch with her elbow, and asked me if I had the colic or gripes,—and so ended my Vision!"

II.

Not many weeks after the publication in Rhode Island of this droll and effective statement of the American case as against the mere proposal of a Stamp Act, there was published there a remarkable pamphlet dealing with the same subject but in a very different manner,—"The Rights of Colonies Examined,"—a piece of political statement which should be of uncommon use to us in our effort to trace the earliest movements of cultivated and filial thought in America, over the issue which the imperial government seemed to be bent on forcing into prominence. This pamphlet was first issued from the press in Providence, on the

twenty-second of December, 1764; it bore upon its front the dignified announcement, "published by authority"; and although the name of the author was not there given, the little book was at once known as the work of no less a person than Stephen Hopkins, then governor of the colony of Rhode Island.[1]

This man, scarcely known to Americans since those days, except for his tremulous autograph written beneath the Declaration of Independence, deserves remembrance also for services among the most precious that man can render to man,—for long and manifold services to American society in all its great interests of thrift, enlightenment, freedom, and order. A far-seeing and an accomplished statesman of the later colonial age, Stephen Hopkins, of the colony of Rhode Island, wrought a good work for all the colonies by helping them to see what were the safe limits of colonial submission; and with a heart that never trembled even when his hand shook, he stood by the side of the earliest and sturdiest statesmen of the Revolution, loyal and loving toward England, dreading with inexpressible dread a disruption of the colonial tie, but dreading still more any surrender to a doctrine of parliamentary authority which, to him, seemed to involve the decline and extinction of all manly civic life in this part of the world.

He was born one year after Benjamin Franklin; he died five years before Franklin; and as their long lives were thus nearly coincident in time, so was there a marked resemblance between the two men in intellectual traits, in studies,

[1] Under charters given by Charles II., both the governor of Rhode Island and the governor of Connecticut were elected by the people; and as the former now entered into public criticism of the policy of the home government, so the latter, who at that time was Thomas Fitch, did the same, in a pamphlet published at New Haven, October 11, 1764, and entitled "Reasons why the British Colonies in America should not be charged with Internal Taxes by Authority of Parliament,"—a serious presentation of the argument, not without sundry questionable statements both of fact and of law. He admits the necessity and propriety of external taxation by parliament, but denies that of internal taxation.

in practical successes, and in the systematic devotion of their great powers to the welfare of their fellow-men.[1]

The intention of Hopkins's pamphlet is happily conveyed to us by its motto:

> "'Mid the low murmurs of submissive fear
> And mingled rage, my Hampden raised his voice,
> And to the Laws appeal'd."[2]

Like so many other political writers of this period, he comes to the problem of parliamentary authority, after an investigation into the origin of society, the nature of government, and the basis of the British constitution and of those political rights which under that constitution seemed to be the inheritance of all British subjects.

But are the American colonists entitled to all the rights of British subjects? Hopkins contends that they are; and first, on general grounds. For, as he asserts, all colonies, in ancient and in modern times, "have always enjoyed as much freedom as the mother state from which they went out."[3] And, in the second place, if such be the fact respecting all other colonies than the British, "will any one suppose the British colonies in America are an exception to this general rule?—colonies that came out from a kingdom

[1] Until within recent years, there has been no better account of Hopkins than is the sketch of him in Sanderson, "Biog. of the Signers," etc., vi. 223–260. This lack has now been admirably supplied by William Eaton Foster's monograph entitled "Stephen Hopkins, a Rhode Island Statesman. A Study in the Political History of the Eighteenth Century," Providence, 1884. In two parts, constituting Number 19 of "R. I. Historical Tracts." In Part i. 199–208, is a list of the existing writings of Hopkins, consisting of pamphlets, official papers, letters, etc.

[2] From "Liberty: A Poem, in Five Parts," by James Thomson. The motto is from Part iv. See "The Complete Works of James Thomson," ed. by George Gilfillan, New York and Edinburgh, 1854, p. 248.

[3] "The Rights of Colonies Examined," 8. The copy which I have used belongs to the library of Harvard University. Hopkins's pamphlet was reprinted by Almon in London in 1766, under this title: "The Grievances of the American Colonies Candidly Examined." This English alteration in the title was in itself a tribute to the author.

renowned for liberty, from a constitution founded on compact, from a people of all the sons of men the most tenacious of freedom ?"[1]

Without dwelling upon the claim to political rights as founded on the original charters—a subject which had been already handled by Otis—Hopkins argues with much force that the parliament had "always understood their rights in the same light."[2] Moreover, these rights, thus resting upon sanctions so august, have always been enjoyed by the British colonies even until now. But now the scene is changing. The last parliament "passed an act, limiting, restricting, and burdening the trade of these colonies much more than had ever been done before; . . . enlarging the power and jurisdiction of the courts of admiralty in the colonies"; and resolving upon the establishment of "stamp duties and other internal taxes." These various measures, enacted and impending, "have caused great uneasiness and consternation among the British subjects on the continent of America,"[3] and for very good reasons.

As to the proposed Stamp Act, the mere announcement of it "hath much more, and for much more reason, alarmed the British subjects in America, than anything that had ever been done before ! . . . For it must be confessed by all men that they who are taxed at pleasure by others, cannot possibly have any property; . . . they who have no property, can have no freedom, but are indeed reduced to the most abject slavery,—are in a condition far worse than countries conquered and made tributary. For these have only a fixed sum to pay, which they are left to raise among themselves, in the way that they may think most equal and easy; and having paid the stipulated sum, the debt is discharged, and what is left is their own. This is more tolerable than to be taxed at the mere will of others, without any bounds, without any stipulation and agreement, contrary to their consent, and against their will."[4]

[1] "The Rights," etc., 8.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid. 10
[4] Ibid. 15–16.

It does not help the case to say that "those who lay these taxes upon the colonies, are men of the highest character for their wisdom, justice, and integrity; . . . for one who is bound to obey the will of another, is as really a slave, though he may have a good master, as if he had a bad one."[1]

Nor will it be any alleviation of the hardship of such taxation, that the money thus drawn from the colonies "will be laid up and set apart for their future defense. This serves only the more strongly to mark the servile state of the people. Free people have ever thought, and always will think, that the money necessary for their own defense, lies safest in their own hands, until it is wanted immediately for that purpose."[2]

Therefore, it is unfair to denounce as unseemly the loud outcry now raised in the colonies against such attacks as these; for, as Dean Swift says, "a man on a wreck was never denied the liberty of roaring as loud as he could."[3] And "is the defense of liberty become so contemptible, and pleading for just rights so dangerous? Can the guardians of liberty be thus ludicrous?"[4]

But it is said that England has gone to great cost on behalf of the colonies, and now deserves some return from them in kind. To what cost has England gone on their behalf? In truth, nearly all the colonies were established without the cost to the government of England of a single penny; from the beginning even until now, they have themselves been at the chief cost of their own defense; while in all England's wars in America against the power of France, the Americans have always contributed in enterprise, treasure, and human life far more than their full proportion.[5]

Nor is it right to say that if the colonies are exempted from taxation by parliament, "they are therefore exempted from bearing their proper share in the necessary burdens of

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[1] "The Rights," etc., 16.
[2] Ibid. 17.
[3] Ibid. 19.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid. 20–21.

government. This by no means follows. Do they not support a regular internal government in each colony, as expensive to the people here, as the internal government of Britain is to the people there? Have not the colonies here, at all times when called upon by the crown, raised money for the public service, doing it as cheerfully as the parliament have done on like occasions? Is not this the most easy, the most natural, and most constitutional way of raising money in the colonies? What occasion, then, to distrust the colonies? What necessity to fall on an invidious and unconstitutional method, to compel them to do what they have ever done freely? Are not the people in the colonies as loyal and dutiful subjects as any age or nation ever produced? And are they not as useful to the kingdom, in this remote quarter of the world, as their fellow subjects are who dwell in Britain? The parliament, it is confessed, have power to regulate the trade of the whole empire; and hath it not full power, by this means, to draw all the wealth of the colonies into the mother country at pleasure? What motive, after all this, can remain to induce the parliament to abridge the privileges and lessen the rights of the most loyal and dutiful subjects,—subjects justly entitled to ample freedom, who have long enjoyed, and not abused or forfeited, their liberties, who have used them to their own advantage in dutiful subserviency to the orders and interests of Great Britain? Why should the gentle current of tranquillity, that has so long run with peace through all the British states, and flowed with joy and happiness in all her countries, be at last obstructed, be turned out of its true course into unusual and winding channels, by which many of those states must be ruined, but none of them can possibly be made more rich or more happy?"[1]

"We finally beg leave to assert," pleads this gallant and dexterous champion, "that the first planters of these colonies were pious Christians, were faithful subjects, who, with a fortitude and perseverance little known and less considered,

[1] "The Rights," etc., 21–22.

settled these wild countries by God's goodness and their own amazing labors; thereby added a most valuable dependence to the crown of Great Britain; were ever dutifully subservient to her interests; so taught their children, that not one has been disaffected to this day, but all have honestly obeyed every royal command and cheerfully submitted to every constitutional law; have as little inclination as they have ability to throw off their dependency; have carefully avoided every offensive measure, and every interdicted manufacture; have risked their lives as they have been ordered, and furnished their money when it has been called for; have never been troublesome or expensive to the mother country; have kept due order, and supported a regular government; have maintained peace and practised Christianity, and in all conditions, and in every relation, have demeaned themselves as loyal, as dutiful, and as faithful subjects ought; and that no kingdom or state hath, or ever had, colonies more quiet, more obedient, or more profitable, than these have ever been.

"May the same Divine Goodness that guided the first planters, protected the settlements, inspired kings to be gracious, parliaments to be tender, ever preserve, ever support, our most gracious king; give great wisdom to his ministers, and much understanding to his parliaments; perpetuate the sovereignty of the British constitution, and the filial dependency and happiness of all the colonies." [1]

The impression made by this strong and sober-minded pamphlet was very great throughout the colonies, in nearly every one of which it was reprinted.[2] Moreover, its tone was so temperate and so conciliatory that both in England and in America, it made its way and carried conviction to many minds that would have been repelled by the brusqueness and asperity of Otis.

[1] "The Rights," etc., 24.

[2] W. E. Foster, "Stephen Hopkins," ii. 57–58, 59, gives facts to indicate the wide influence of this pamphlet.

III.

Thus far, the whole current of American opinion seemed to be setting in one direction—that of dissent from the new colonial policy of the government; and had these criticisms been confined to the usual limits of political opposition—to arguments, for example, against mere details of the policy in question—it is doubtful if the current of American opinion, thus vigorously running in the channel of dissent, would have ever encountered any serious resistance either in America or in England. In all these discussions, however, though pervaded by ardent and honest avowals of love for England and of delight in membership of the British empire, was to be discovered the germ of a doctrine which, under every valid form of government, has been deemed inadmissible,—a doctrine which, under our present form of government, has been sternly condemned, in battle and blood, as a pestilent political heresy,—the doctrine of Nullification ! It was in opposition to just this heresy, in its incipient stage,—a heresy which tainted the argument of Stephen Hopkins, as it had already done that of Thacher and of Otis,—that our first Loyalist writer took up his pen. Moreover, it is a token of the unequal conditions under which the debate was thenceforward to be conducted by the two opposite parties, that this first Loyalist writer thought it needful to hide himself under the double concealment of a pseudonym and of an alibi.

Hopkins's pamphlet, as will be remembered, had first appeared in December, 1764, in Providence; and it was in February, 1765, that there was published at Newport a pamphlet in reply, entitled " A Letter from a Gentleman at Halifax, To His Friend in Rhode Island." This enigmatic gentleman at Halifax writes to his apocryphal friend in Rhode Island that he has been reading Hopkins's pamphlet, which he finds " a labored ostentatious piece," and quite inferior to that of Otis, " who, though unhappily misled by popular ideas, and at the head of the tribunitian veto, yet

appears to be a man of knowledge and parts."[1] The writer hopes that Hopkins's pamphlet does not accurately represent the prevailing temper of the colonists, whom he advises by all means to meditate on the seriousness of the act of affronting a power like that of England; and then, without more ado, he proceeds to attack the central doctrine, which is also the central fallacy, of Hopkins's pamphlet,—"that the colonies have rights independent of, and not controlled by, the authority of parliament."[2] This doctrine—this fallacy—is itself founded on two propositions, both of them fallacious: first, that the American colonists have under their charters all the political rights of Englishmen at home; and, secondly, that they may not be taxed by parliament unless they themselves send members to parliament.

Against the first of these propositions he argues that, as the colonies are in law mere corporations created by the crown, their privileges are precisely those which are fixed and ascertained by their charters. "I fancy," he goes on to say, "when we speak or think of the rights of freeborn Englishmen, we confound those rights which are personal with those which are political. . . . Our personal rights, comprehending those of life, liberty, and estate, are secured to us by the common law, which is every subject's birthright, whether born in Great Britain, on the ocean, or in the colonies; and it is in this sense we are said to enjoy all the rights and privileges of Englishmen. The political rights of the colonies, or the powers of government communicated to them, are more limited; and their nature, quality, and extent depend altogether upon the patent or charter which first created and instituted them. As individuals, the colonists participate of every blessing the English constitution can give them; as corporations created by the crown, they are confined within the primitive views of their institution. Whether, therefore, their indulgence is scanty or liberal, can be no cause of complaint; for when they accepted of

[1] "A Letter," etc., 4. [2] Ibid. 6.

their charters, they tacitly submitted to the terms and conditions of them." [1]

Against the second of these propositions, that because the colonists do not elect members to parliament, therefore they cannot be taxed by parliament, he argues that, by every sound view of the constitution, the jurisdiction of the British parliament must be supreme throughout the whole extent of the British empire; that the American colonies have received from their charters "no exemption from the jurisdiction of parliament"; indeed, that "no grant of the king could exempt them from this jurisdiction, because the common law . . . confessedly reaches the colonies, and brings with it that jurisdiction, and announces its force and operation over them"; finally, that the members of the house of commons, by whomsoever elected, are from that moment the "representatives of every British subject wherever he be, and therefore, to every useful and beneficial purpose, the interests of the colonists are as well secured and managed by such a house, as though they had a share in electing them." [2] "Let me ask," he continues, "is the Isle of Man, Jersey, or Guernsey represented? What is the value or amount of each man's representation in the kingdom of Scotland, which contains near two millions of people, and yet not more than three thousand have votes in the election of members of parliament? . . . Let us take into the argument the moneyed interest of Britain, which, though immensely great, has no share in this representation. A worthless freeholder of forty shillings per annum can vote for a member of parliament, whereas a merchant, though worth one hundred thousand pounds sterling, if it consists in personal effects has no vote at all. But yet let no one suppose that the interest of the latter is not equally the object of parliamentary attention with the

[1] "A Letter," etc., 8–9.

[2] The clauses quoted in the above sentence are from a summary of his own argument in this pamphlet, but given by the author himself in his later pamphlet, "A Defence," etc., 13.

former. Let me add one example more. Copyholders in England of one thousand pounds sterling per annum . . . cannot by law vote for members of parliament; yet we never hear that these people 'murmur with submissive fear and mingled rage.' . . . In truth, my friend, the matter lies here: the freedom and happiness of every British subject depends, not upon his share in elections, but upon the sense and virtue of the whole British parliament; and these depend reciprocally upon the sense and virtue of the whole nation." [1]

As to the ancient constitutional formula—"No taxation without representation"—of course it is true in the sense intended by the men who originated it and who have handed it down to us; but it is not true when "taken in a literal sense," as it is now taken by so many Americans; and being by them thus "ill understood" and falsely applied, it "has made all the mischief in the colonies," where its perpetual incantation has had effects only to be compared to those once produced by "the song of Lillibullero." [2]

As to the dispute now arising between the colonies and the mother country, it has two issues: first, concerning the jurisdiction of parliament, and, secondly, concerning the merits of the particular measures now undertaken by parliament in the exercise of its jurisdiction. If the colonies are wise, they will abandon the former issue, and concentrate themselves upon the latter. Let them object to any act of parliament, if they will,—but never because it is an act of parliament, and only because it is not a wise or good act of parliament. Therefore, the colonists "are at full liberty to remonstrate, petition, write pamphlets and newspapers without number, to prevent any improper or unreasonable legislation. Nay, I would have them do all this, with that spirit of freedom which Englishmen" have always carried into their political discussions. [3] All serious difficulties may be overcome, all real wrongs may be righted, if only the agita-

[1] "A Letter," etc., 12–13. [2] Ibid. 11. [3] Ibid. 21.

tion be conducted with patience and good humor, or at any rate within the old lines of the constitution. In response to demands presented in this spirit, "the supreme legislature of the nation" may be expected in due time "to frame some code of laws, and therein adjust the rights of the colonies with precision and certainty."[1]

In conclusion, though the writer has no ambition to appear in print, he yet permits the publication of his letter, should its publication seem likely to be of use; and this permission he gives all the more cheerfully for the reason that, "notwithstanding the frequent abuse poured forth in pamphlets and newspapers against the mother country, not one filial pen in America hath as yet been drawn . . . in her vindication."[2]

Upon the whole, it must be admitted that the Loyalists of the American Revolution here make their entrance into American literature in a form not at all discreditable either to their intelligence, or to their character, or to their manners. This "Letter from a Gentleman at Halifax to his Friend in Rhode Island" is an able and an impressive political statement. Temperate in thought and in personal allusion, not lacking in sarcasm, and yet never abusive or unparliamentary, it rests upon a clear and a strong basis both in constitutional law and in sound policy. It indicates, moreover, no little familiarity with literature, and especially with English poetry. Of course, it is in no sense a work of genius; but in thought and in form it is quite above the ordinary level of political controversy. It was evidently the work of an able lawyer, of a man of sense and a man of affairs; and being in its tone at once firm, patriotic, moderate, and gentlemanlike, it would be apt to carry along with it a considerable number of the class of fair-minded men—unless already otherwise committed. Its genuine power was shown in the instant and angry rebound against it.

[1] "A Letter," etc., 22. [2] Ibid.

IV.

So instant and so angry was the rebound against the "Letter from a Gentleman at Halifax," that before it had been many days in the hands of the public, the deputy-governor of Rhode Island went before the lower house of the general assembly, asking them to take the offensive pamphlet into their consideration, and to proceed either against the printer of the pamphlet or against the pamphlet itself. This proposition was supported by "some warm members" of the house, who denounced the pamphlet as a libel, and demanded that the printer should be sent for, and that the pamphlet should be burned by the common hangman.[1]

Then, for some time, over this first literary manifesto of the Loyalist party, raged a war of words,—witty or witless, —here hard-hitting arguments, there only coarse noises as of coarse men falling upon one another in a brutal fray. Stephen Hopkins himself, whose pamphlet had given immediate occasion for the onslaught of the Halifaxian, now deals with his assailant, after his own reasonable and dignified fashion, in sundry articles published in "The Providence Gazette."[2] James Otis, too, takes a hand in the mêlée, partly because it was never easy for him to keep out of any good fight that might be going on in his neighborhood, and partly because he had himself been a target for the fleering compliments of the foe. The peculiar vivacity which he thus contributes to the quarrel, by his "Vindication of the British Colonies against the Aspersions of the Halifax Gentleman," may be inferred from a single sentence of his pamphlet, wherein, after the classic manner of controversy in those days, he describes the tractate of his opponent as containing "the quintessence of a mere martial legislator, the insolence of a haughty and imperious minister, the indolence and half-thought of a petit maître, the flutter of a

[1] "A Defence," etc., 28.

[2] For February 23, March 2, March 9, and April 8, 1765. Also W. E. Foster, "Stephen Hopkins," ii. 61.

coxcomb, the pedantry of a quack, and the nonsense of a pettifogger."[1] Of course, a debater so competent as Otis, though lapsing thus into occasional vituperation, could never need to rest his cause on mere spiteful balderdash. Accordingly, taking up one by one the chief arguments of the Halifax Gentleman, he confers upon that still visored combatant many a neat and telling stroke; as when, replying to his claim that since but few people in Great Britain could vote for members of parliament, therefore the Americans need not murmur because none of them could do so, he says:—"Many great and good men have complained of the inequality of the representation in Great Britain. This inequality can never be a reason for making it more so."[2]

This screed of James Otis against the Halifax Gentleman was delivered to the public, probably, in March, 1765; and in April, probably, the Halifax Gentleman made his second and his final appearance in the lists, retorting both upon Otis and upon Hopkins. This he did in a pamphlet published at Newport, and entitled "A Defence of the Letter from a Gentleman at Halifax to His Friend in Rhode Island." Like the former production of this writer, it bears not a few marks of literary cultivation; and compared with most controversial writing in that period, whether in America or abroad, it seems rather notable for its urbanity. As though holding some vantage of superiority to partisan passion and tumult, and constantly chaffing his adversaries with a contemptuous humor all the more insufferable because so cool and so effortless, he proceeds to trace the origin and development of the American idea of nullifying the legislative authority of parliament; he cites passages from American newspapers to illustrate the new spirit of colonial disregard for the mother country,—that "unfilial disposition" against which, in his former pamphlet, he had directed his censures. For this service, he had been covered with "illiberal opposition and multiplied abuse . . .

[1] "A Vindication of the British Colonies," etc., 46.

[2] Ibid. 20.

from various quarters,"[1] especially from "two very distinguished personages,"[2] "the exactest models of politeness, urbanity, and softness of manners, perhaps, in America."[3]

One of these, "the Providence writer," he teases for a time in his nonchalant fashion, charging him, also, with being a politician who had lately turned his coat. As to "the Boston writer," he declines to take that gentleman seriously, although he admits that the reading of Otis's latest pamphlet is a very serious business. He had, indeed, "with great travail and perseverance, waded through this dreary waste of thirty-two pages. In attempting to explore it, chaos seemed to be come again. The patience he exercised on that dark and gloomy occasion, has fitted him for any misfortune or disappointment in life. Pain he will no more consider as an evil. Nay, should he be forced to pass the Stygian river, and drink its poisonous vapors, it would be more than Elysian compared with the misery of reading through this pamphlet." At the conclusion of his paper, he announces that whatever treatment he may now receive, he will not further engage in "a controversy which his antagonists have already made personal, and therefore can answer no end but to sour and provoke one against another. Recrimination throws no light upon the enquiry, and the subject becomes lost in a torrent of abuse. . . . He will give no occasion for the further production of human depravity and baseness, lest he should lose that philanthropy which at present administers to him the greatest contentment, next to that he derives from the esteem and friendship of good and virtuous men."[4]

V.

It was not in the nature of James Otis to permit an antagonist thus to fold his robes about him and in haughty composure to retire from the field, without at least having his garments ruffled by a farewell shot from himself. This

[1] "A Defence of the Letter," etc., 3. [2] Ibid. 4. [3] Ibid. 14. [4] Ibid. 29.

farewell shot, accordingly, Otis sent with his usual promptitude, in the shape of a pamphlet of about forty pages, entitled "Brief Remarks on the Defence of the Halifax Libel on the British American Colonies"[1]: a piece of writing the least worthy of respect, probably, of all that ever fell from that unsteady hand,—a confused mixture of controversial ingredients, with which the impetuous patriot, quite out of temper, ostentatiously carries the dispute down to the level of a street-fight. Pointing out his antagonist as a citizen, not of Halifax, but of Newport,—then the seat of a great maritime commerce and of the most cosmopolitan community in America,—he bespatters him as one of a motley crowd of political desperadoes in that town, who, having not long before been deep in treason as conspirators for the Pretender, are now posing as the peculiar champions of the House of Hanover: "a set of gentry who are in combination to vilify the colonies, and depreciate every service they have rendered the crown. . . . Such is the little, dirty, drinking, drabbing, contaminated knot of thieves, beggars, and transports . . . collected from the four winds of the earth, and made up of Turks, Jews, and other infidels, with a few renegado Christians and Catholics, and altogether formed into a club of scarce a dozen at Newport.[2] From hence proceed Halifax letters, petitions to alter the colony forms of government, libels upon all good colonists and subjects, and every evil work that can enter into the heart of man. These are some of the gentry who, all of a sudden, have become the most

[1] Of this pamphlet, but nine copies are known to be in existence. The copy used by me, now belonging to the library of Cornell University, formerly belonged to E. B. O'Callaghan. There need be no doubt that Otis was the author of it. By some mistake, possibly a mere slip of the pen, William Tudor, on the 188th page of his "Life of Otis," published in 1823, spoke of the pamphlet as the work of Stephen Hopkins; and from this misleading statement, apparently, the pamphlet has been often since then attributed to Hopkins, rather than to Otis. A perfectly satisfactory account of the whole matter has been given by W. E. Foster, in his "Stephen Hopkins," ii. 227–230, Appendix I., "A Question of Authorship."

[2] The text reads, N—p—t.

loyal subjects in America, and have had the impudence to attempt to persuade all England that the rest of the colonists are as great rebels as ever appeared in arms for the Pretender." [1]

VI.

At the time when Otis was preparing this parting salute for the clever pamphleteer who had so much irritated him, it had become pretty well known that the "Gentleman at Halifax" was, in reality, none other than a very eminent gentleman of Newport, Martin Howard by name, an accomplished lawyer, and a politician of such note that so early as the year 1754 he had been associated with Stephen Hopkins as a delegate from Rhode Island in the Albany Congress. Roughly as Martin Howard was now handled by Otis for the offense of disagreeing with the new doctrine and the new party of colonial Nullification, he was soon to experience far rougher treatment, and for the same offense, at the hands of his own fellow-townsmen, who, in contending for "the cause of liberty," did not understand by that term the liberty to hold, upon the question then in dispute, any opinions other than those which they themselves held. Accordingly, on Tuesday, the 27th of the following August, at about nine o'clock in the morning, an angry crowd of people in Newport "brought forth the effigies of three persons, in a cart, with halters about their necks, to a gallows twenty feet high, placed near the town-house, where they were hung to public view till near night, when they were cut down, and burnt under the gallows, amidst the acclamations of thousands." Of these three effigies, one was meant to personate Martin Howard. On the next evening, also, the same mob assembled once more, and beset the house of Martin Howard, which they did not leave until they had thoroughly gutted it, had burned or smashed his furniture, and had injured his person; whereupon he him-

[1] "Brief Remarks," etc., 5.

self, being at last houseless and well-nigh friendless, and fearing for his life even there in the place of his kindly engendrure, "took shelter in the *Signet* man-of-war, and soon after departed for Great Britain."[1]

[1] My account of the mobbing of Howard is derived chiefly from a contemporary narrative in Almon, "Prior Documents," 14. In the "Records of the Colony of R. I.," vii. 216, 217, is given Howard's own claim against the government of Rhode Island for damages sustained by him in this riot, followed by the grimly humorous award thereon as made by the legislative committee in 1773. For the single item as to the injury then done to his person, I depend on the modern narrative of Sabine, in his "Loyalists of the Am. Rev.," i. 547. The plan of Sabine's book is praiseworthy as calling for a treatment of the American Revolution in a spirit of historic disinterestedness far in advance of his own time; but the execution of the work is slovenly and inaccurate. At the page above cited, the reader may find a brief sketch of Howard's subsequent career as a magistrate in North Carolina down to 1778, when he finally made his escape to England, where he died in 1781 or 1782. I have been unable to meet with any evidence to confirm Sabine's statement as to the bad personal character of Howard. The loose remark that "careful pens speak of his profligate character and of his corrupt and wicked designs," leaves us still regretting that we have not the advantage of knowing just who held these "careful pens," or just how much their testimony might happen to be worth.

CHAPTER IV.

THE AMERICAN DEBATE AS ENLIVENED BY A BRITISH PAMPHLETEER: 1765.

I.—The literary character of Soame Jenyns—His lively pamphlet entitled "The Objections to the Taxation of Our American Colonies, Briefly Considered"—An example of ease and gayety in the solution of difficult problems—His discussion of the maxim, "No taxation without representation"—Admiration of this pamphlet in England—Its great immediate success as a political irritant.

II.—Otis's reply to Soame Jenyns, in "Considerations on Behalf of the Colonies, in a Letter to a Noble Lord," September, 1765—The controversial method of this pamphlet—Otis ridicules the doctrine of virtual representation—Scoffs at the pretense that the colonies need protection—His serious discussion of constitutional questions—Advises the British government to be careful of the affections of the American colonists.

I.

EARLY in the year 1765, not far from the time when the new political heresy of colonial Nullification was receiving at the hands of Martin Howard its first literary attack in America, it received in England a literary attack still more effective at the hands of the noted wit, politician, and man of letters, Soame Jenyns, then for more than twenty years a member of parliament, and for about ten years one of the commissioners of the board of trade: a writer of whom Dr. Johnson said that, even in the discussion of a subject the most difficult and the most solemn, he seemed to have "an affectation of ease and carelessness, as if it were not suitable to his character to be very serious about the matter."[1]

[1] Boswell, "Life of Johnson," ed. by Birkbeck Hill, iii. 288. Gerard Hamilton told Malone that Jenyns could not readily be made "to comprehend an argument. If, however, there was anything weak or defective or ridiculous in what another said, he always laid hold of it and played upon it with success. He looked at everything with a view to pleasantry alone." Prior, "Life of Malone," 375.

Precisely this was his tone in dealing with the American question. All the complexities of that sombre problem which was then lowering over the English-speaking race, he dispatches in a nimble-footed pamphlet of about twenty pages of coarse print, entitled "The Objections to the Taxation of Our American Colonies by the Legislature of Great Britain, Briefly Considered,"[1] wherein he touches, as was his wont, the tips and fringes of the subject, doing so in that style of argumentative banter, and of jocular facility in disposing of other people's difficulties, which had already procured for him among his contemporaries extraordinary admiration as being a man of fashion who also knew how to transact the business of Grub Street with the high-bred ease, the sparkle, and the persiflage of the court. To some, indeed, the subject of American taxation might have seemed too technical and too dry to be capable of lending itself to the purposes of a mere purveyor of literary confectionery and of philosophical small-talk; yet even upon this unpromising theme, such was his lightness of touch, his gayety, his shrewdness, his air of social superiority, and his apparent proffer to his readers of the ripe fruits of political wisdom without any cost or toil to them, that his little book leaped at once into considerable vogue, as furnishing out the fashionable world with a complete stock of replies—of short, sharp, conclusive, and not too serious replies—to all possible objections against the taxation of America by parliament.

The right of parliament to tax America, and the expediency of its doing so, are, according to Soame Jenyns, propositions so perfectly plain, that no one would dare to undertake their defense, "had not many arguments been

[1] Two editions of this pamphlet appeared in London in 1765. My references are to the second ed., which differs from the first only in a slightly different paging. See, also, the "Works of Soame Jenyns," ii. 189–204. It is no part of my plan in the present work to include English writings on the American dispute, excepting when, as in the present case, such writings need to be briefly described in order to indicate the occasion and character of the American comments upon them.

lately flung out, both in papers and conversation, which, with insolence equal to their absurdity, deny them both." Moreover, these arguments "are usually mixed up with several patriotic and favorite words, such as liberty, property, Englishmen, and so forth, which are apt to make strong impressions on that more numerous part of mankind, who have ears but no understanding." [1]

In looking over this rabble of arguments against the taxation of the colonies by parliament, he finds one which appears to him to be "the great capital argument," and which, "like an elephant at the head of a nabob's army, being once overthrown, must put the whole to confusion." [2] This argument may be stated thus: "No Englishman is or can be taxed, without the consent of the majority of those who are elected by himself and others of his fellow-subjects, to represent them." Now, this statement is simply not true; "for, every Englishman is taxed, and not one in twenty is represented. Copyholders, leaseholders, and all men possessed of personal property only, choose no representatives. Manchester, Birmingham, and many more of our richest and most flourishing trading towns send no members to parliament; consequently, cannot consent by their representatives, because they choose none to represent them. Yet are they not Englishmen, or are they not taxed?" [3] Well, then, "if the towns of Manchester and Birmingham, sending no representatives to parliament, are notwithstanding there represented, why are not the cities of Albany and Boston equally represented in that assembly? Are they not alike British subjects? Are they not Englishmen? Or, are they only Englishmen when they solicit for protection, but not Englishmen when taxes are required to enable this country to protect them?" [4]

But the Americans, not being tyros in debate, nor ever without resource in any logical stress or emergency whatsoever, are here ready with a reply: "that the colonies are by their charters placed under distinct governments, each of

[1] "The Objections," etc., 3–4. [2] Ibid. 4–5. [3] Ibid. 7. [4] Ibid. 9.

which has a legislative power within itself, by which alone it ought to be taxed; that if this privilege is once given up, that liberty which every Englishman has a right to, is torn from them,—they are all slaves, and all is lost!" [1] A most plausible plea, to be sure! And yet how much of truth does it hold? In the first place, "'The liberty of an Englishman' is a phrase of so various a signification—having within these few years been used as a synonymous term for blasphemy, bawdry, treason, libels, strong beer, and cider—that I shall not here presume to define its meaning; but I shall venture to assert what it cannot mean,—that is, an exemption from taxes imposed by the authority of the parliament of Great Britain." "Nor," in the second place, "is there any charter that ever pretended to grant such a privilege to any colony in America; and had they granted it, it could have had no force,—their charters being derived from the crown, and no charter from the crown can possibly supersede the right of the whole legislature. Their charters are undoubtedly no more than those of all corporations, which impower them to make by-laws and raise duties for the purposes of their own police, forever subject to the superior authority of parliament. And, in some of their charters, the manner of exercising these powers is specified in these express words—'according to the course of other corporations in Great Britain.' And, therefore, they can have no more pretense to plead exemption from this parliamentary authority, than any other corporation in England." [2]

Finally, as regards the question of right, it has been suggested that the whole difficulty might be solved by a very simple process—that of introducing into parliament members elected from the several colonies. "I shall not here consider the impracticability of this method, nor the effects of it, if it could be practised, but only say, that I have lately seen so many specimens of the great powers of speech of which these American gentlemen are possessed, that I should be much afraid that the sudden importation of so

[1] "The Objections," etc., 9–10. [2] Ibid. 10–11.

much eloquence at once, would greatly endanger the safety and government of this country. . . . If we can avail ourselves of these taxes on no other condition, I shall never look upon it as a measure of frugality, being perfectly satisfied that in the end it would be much cheaper for us to pay their army, than their orators." [1]

The literary and especially the polemic cleverness of this pamphlet cannot be justly estimated without some comparison of it with the mass of pamphlets, English and American, which were produced at about the same time, and upon the same subject. A recent English historian has spoken of it as containing "the most powerful reasoning in favor of American taxation" that he has ever met with.[2] Most writers of that period, however, if upon the opposite side of the question, seem to have been impressed rather by its exasperating qualities—the very qualities, probably, which its author most desired it to have—particularly, its deft unscrupulousness in fastening upon a few available points of the case, and in stating these so adroitly, with such derisive humor, with such an air of easy infallibility, as to seem to settle the whole question off-hand and as a matter of course, for all but dunces and scoundrels. It could hardly be expected that American writers in opposition, being themselves very much in earnest, and profoundly convinced of the strength and the importance of their cause, should be able to read with entire patience a writer who insisted on dealing with them as the perpetrators of a sort of political joke which had the disadvantage of being both stupid and impudent. The irritation which they betrayed in their replies to Soame Jenyns may perhaps have given him the very evidence he most coveted of his own success.

[1] "The Objections," etc., 17–18.

[2] Sir Edward Creasy, "The Imperial and Colonial Constitutions of the Britannic Empire," 149 n.

II.

One of the most notable of these replies was by James Otis, and was, in fact, his last service in this form of writing,—" Considerations on Behalf of the Colonies, in a Letter to a Noble Lord "[1]: a capital specimen of the jaunty, slashing, controversial pamphlet of the period; without urbanity or dignity; catching at all occasions for personal retort upon his opponent, and anon flinging at him some blunt epithet, just as one would fling a brick; at the same time, having abundant dialectic skill, legal sense, political sagacity, flashes of noble sentiment, and the sort of popular effectiveness which comes of a Gothic mixture of keenness, bitterness, and buffoonery.

Upon the very title-page of Soame Jenyns's tract occurs a phrase which seems to have had a peculiarly rasping effect on his American critic—the phrase, " our American colonies." " Whose colonies," exclaims Otis, " can the creature mean? The minister's colonies? No, surely. Whose then,—his own? I never heard he had any colonies: ' Nec gladio, nec arcu, nec astu vicerunt.' He must mean his majesty's American colonies. His majesty's colonies they are, and I hope and trust ever will be. . . . Every garreteer, from the environs of Grub Street, to the purlieus of St. James's, has lately talked of ' his,' and ' my,' and ' our ' colonies, and of the ' rascally colonists.' . . . I cannot see why the American peasants may not with as much propriety speak of their cities of London and Westminster, of their isles of Britain, Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey, Sark, and the Orcades, and of the ' rivulets and runlets thereof,' and consider them all but as appendages to their sheepcotes and goose-pens."[2]

Perhaps the most effective thing in Soame Jenyns's pamphlet was its well-handled attempt to put out of court the

[1] Originally printed in " The Boston Gazette," over the signature " F. A.,' and dated 4 Sep., 1765. Reprinted by Almon in London in 1765, where it passed through two editions within that year.

[2] " Considerations," etc., 13–14.

colonial plea against parliamentary taxation, by showing that there were in England itself vast unrepresented populations which could as justly go into court with the same plea. "To what purpose is it," retorts Otis, "to ring everlasting changes to the colonists on the cases of Manchester, Birmingham, and Sheffield, who return no members? If these now so considerable places are not represented, they ought to be! Besides, the counties in which those respectable abodes of tinkers, tinmen, and pedlars lie, return members; so do all the neighboring cities and boroughs. In the choice of the former, if they have no vote, they must naturally and necessarily have a great influence. I believe every gentleman of a landed estate, near a flourishing manufactory, will be careful enough of its interests. Though the great India Company as such returns no members, yet many of the company are returned, and their interests have been ever very carefully attended to. Mr. Jenyns[1] says, 'by far the major part of the inhabitants of Great Britain are non electors.' The more is the pity! 'Every Englishman,' he tells us, 'is taxed; and yet not one in twenty is represented.' . . . So, a small minority rules and governs the majority! . . . What 'ab initio' could give an absolute unlimited right to one twentieth of a community, to govern the other nineteen by their sovereign will and pleasure? . . . His way of reasoning would as well prove that the British house of commons, in fact, represent all the people on the globe, as those in America. . . . Should the British empire one day be extended round the whole world, would it be reasonable that all mankind should have their concerns managed by the electors of Old Sarum and the occupants of the Cornish barns and ale-houses?" "It is in my humble opinion as good law, and as good sense too, to affirm that all the plebeians of Great Britain are in fact or virtually represented in the assembly of the Tuscaroras, as that all the colonists are in fact or virtually represented in the honorable house of commons of Great

[1] The text reads, J——s.

Britain, separately considered as one branch of the supreme and universal legislature of the whole empire." [1]

Then, too, James Otis, like many another American, had winced under the taunt which Soame Jenyns flung at them when he asked, if the colonists are "only Englishmen when they solicit for protection, but not Englishmen when taxes are required to enable this country to protect them?" "I ask in my turn," replies Otis, "when did the colonies solicit for protection? They have had no occasion to solicit for protection, since the happy accession of our gracious sovereign's illustrious family to the British diadem. His majesty, the father of all his people, protects all his loyal subjects of every complexion and language, without any particular solicitation. But, before the ever memorable Revolution, the northern colonies were so far from receiving protection from Britain, that every thing was done, from the throne to the footstool, to cramp, betray, and ruin them. Yet, against the combined power of France, Indian savages, and the corrupt administration of those times, they carried on their settlements, and under a mild government for these eighty years past, have made them the wonder and envy of the world." [2] And, then, as to protection, now and in the future, against whom are we to be protected? "Against whom? Why, a few ragged Indians, thousands and ten thousands of whose fathers, without European aid when we most wanted it, were sent to the infernal shades!" [3]

But the real strength of Otis's pamphlet lies, not in its repartees, but in its direct presentments of policy—of sound and statesmanlike policy—touching all those questions then inflaming the relations of the American colonies with the mother country. First, as a good constitutional lawyer, Otis admits and proclaims the principle of the supremacy of parliament throughout the entire extent of the British empire: "True it is, that from the nature of the British constitution, and also from the idea and nature of a supreme

[1] "Considerations," etc., 6–10, 51. [2] Ibid. 11–12. [3] Ibid. 29.

legislature, the parliament represent the whole community or empire, and have an undoubted power, authority, and jurisdiction over the whole; and to their final decisions the whole must and ought peaceably to submit."[1] But, secondly, having conceded this, he demands that parliament, in the exercise of its supremacy over all, should be lenient toward the American colonies, and, as a matter of equitable and politic forbearance, should refrain from imposing heavy taxes on them, especially "while their trade and commerce are every day more than ever restricted."[2] To be thus indulgent is, indeed, to exercise a wise discrimination which parliament has been wont to exercise upon many occasions. For example, "great tenderness has been shown to the customs of particular cities and boroughs; and, surely, as much indulgence might be reasonably expected towards large provinces, the inhabitants of which have been born and [have] grown up under the modes and customs of a subordinate jurisdiction."[3] And, finally, who and what are these American provinces on behalf of which such consideration is demanded? "I affirm, and that on the best information, the sun rises and sets every day in the sight of five millions of his majesty's American subjects, white, brown, and black. . . . Five millions of as true and loyal subjects as ever existed, with their good affections to the best civil constitution in the world, descending to unborn myriads, is no small object. God grant it may be well attended to! Had I the honor to be minister to the first, the best, monarch in the universe, and trustee for the bravest people, except perhaps one, that ever existed, I might reason in this manner: 'The Roman Eagle is dead. The British Lion lives. Strange revolutions! The savage roving Britons, who fled before Julius Cæsar, who were vanquished by his successors, Hengist and Horsa, who cut the throats of the Lurdanes,[4] and fell under the Norman bondage, are,

[1] "Considerations," etc., 9. [2] Ibid. 10. [3] Ibid. 9–10.

[4] "Spenser's Scholiast says, 'loord' was wont, among the old Britons, to signify a lord; therefore the Danes that usurped their tyranny here in Britain, were called, for more dread than dignity, 'lurdanes,' i. e., Lord Danes."—Johnson's Dictionary, sub. Loord.

after all, the masters of the sea, the lords of the ocean, the terror of Europe, and the envy of the universe! Can Briton rise higher? Yes. How? . . . Revolutions have been. They may be again. Nay, in the course of time, they must be. Provinces have not been ever kept in subjection. What, then, is to be done? Why, it is of little importance to my master, whether a thousand years hence the colonies remain dependent on Britain or not; my business is to fall on the only means to keep them ours for the longest term possible. How can that be done? Why, in one word, it must be by nourishing and cherishing them, as the apple of your eye. All history will prove that provinces have never been disposed to independency, while well treated. Well treated, then, they shall be!' ''[1]

[1] "Considerations," etc., 30–32.

CHAPTER V.

THE STAMP ACT AS A STIMULANT TO POLITICAL DISCUSSION: AUGUST, 1765 – JANUARY, 1766.

I.—The Stamp Act finds the Americans already alarmed on account of their political dangers—Johnson's lines in Goldsmith's "Traveller"—His unconsciousness of the gravity of pending legislation.

II.—John Adams—His literary response to the news of the passage of the Stamp Act, August, 1765—His range and boldness as a political thinker—His literary vivacity.

III.—John Adams regards the Anglo-American dispute as but one chapter in a world-wide dispute between individualism and corporate authority—Such authority he finds embodied in the canon and feudal law—The old confederacy of kings and priests—This confederacy partly broken up by the Reformation.

IV.—John Adams deems the Reformation as the true cause of English settlements in North America—Hence American antagonism to all civil and ecclesiastical tyranny—The Stamp Act is but another effort of aggression on behalf of such tyranny—To resist it is to do battle for human nature everywhere—The Americans as heirs of the ancient spirit of English liberty—The publication of John Adams's essays in Boston and in London.

V.—The political essays of a Connecticut pastor, Stephen Johnson, September and October, 1765—Their clear warning of danger to the American connection with Great Britain.

VI.—Daniel Dulany's "Considerations," October, 1765—His personal history—His high standing as a lawyer in the Middle and Southern Colonies.

VII.—Dulany's great argument against the doctrine of virtual representation.

VIII.—Dulany denies that his disproof of virtual representation involves the denial of the legislative authority of parliament—He advises his countrymen to be loyal and orderly, but to make parliamentary taxation unprofitable to Great Britain—Let America produce all she consumes.

IX.—Dulany remains faithful to his doctrine of orderly and legal opposition—In later years is persecuted as a Tory—His argument makes a deep impression both in America and in England—His influence seen in the speeches of Pitt on the repeal of the Stamp Act, January and February, 1766.

X.—The public papers of the Stamp Act Congress, October, 1765—Their great political and personal significance.

XI.—"The Late Regulations respecting the British Colonies," by John Dickinson, December, 1765—The doctrine of Nullification boldly advocated in "Considerations upon the Rights of the Colonists," early in 1766.

XII.—American political anxiety and indignation passionately expressed by an American verse-writer in London—His Satire of "Oppression," 1765—Outline of the poem.

I.

ALL students of the American Revolution, who have been accustomed to view the passage of the Stamp Act, in March, 1765, as the initial event in a famous series that became sufficiently long and tragic, are likely to find some difficulty in accounting for the seeming suddenness with which the American people then sprang up, from what is thereby assumed to have been a previous condition of profound colonial content, into one of universal alarm and anger, as well as of clearly-defined and highly-matured constitutional opposition. In truth, however, there never was in America that previous condition of profound colonial content, although, until the removal, through the Peace of Paris in 1763, of the greater danger from France, the American colonists had submitted with as much reticence as possible to the lesser danger from England. Ever since their earliest settlements here, which began in the reigns of the first James and the first Charles, these Englishmen in America had retained and exercised their hereditary race-qualities: they had always been sensitive to the encroachments of prerogative, and they had always been political grumblers. Moreover, the specimens of American political literature which have thus far received our attention, all show the peculiar alertness of political suspicion which had been awakened among them for at least two years before the passage of the Stamp Act, as well as the clear development of their political philosophy and political purpose touching those extraordinary constitutional dangers which, during the same two years, had been steadily gathering head.

Within the last few weeks of the year 1764—that year of premonition to the American colonies—was first published, in London, Goldsmith's poem of "The Traveller"; and among the ten closing lines of it, written, as is well known, by Dr. Johnson, are these two:—

> "How small, of all that human hearts endure,
> That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!" [1]

The events which occurred both in England and in America, during the subsequent twelve months, furnish a rather derisive comment on the limited range of the poet's vision when he wrote this sonorous couplet, and especially on his entire unconsciousness of the vast and bitter burdens, for millions of human hearts, actually to be created by laws just then under consideration in London,—an unconsciousness in which, probably, Samuel Johnson was surpassed by no other great man in England, excepting always his good friend, the King.

II.

Among the most striking of the literary responses to the news that, in disregard of all appeals from America, the Stamp Act had become a law, was one by a writer of extraordinary vigor in argument, of extraordinary affluence in invective, who chose to view the whole problem as having logical and historical relations far more extensive than had then been commonly supposed,—relations far more serious to mankind in general, than would attach to a mere dispute in Anglo-American politics. This writer was John Adams, then but thirty years old, a rising member of the bar of Massachusetts, already known in that neighborhood for his acuteness, fearlessness, and restless energy as a thinker, and for a certain truculent and sarcastic splendor in his style of speech. To the very end of his long life, even his most off-hand writings, such as diaries and domestic letters, reveal in

[1] "The Works of Oliver Goldsmith," i. 21.

him a trait of speculative activity and boldness: they show that his mind teemed and bubbled and sparkled with ideas; that he was all the time building theories of society, government, religion, literature, education, conduct; that he was for ever piercing with his virile and dauntless intelligence the past, present, and future, the qualities and relationships of all beings in time and eternity, in heaven, and earth, and hell. Moreover, his ideas are never cool, never colorless. His brain was not insulated from his heart; nay his heart, and even his conscience, poured their warm streams through his brain, and gave to his words a moral and emotional thoughtfulness which is at least stimulating, often wholesome and refreshing. This quality makes John Adams's writings interesting,—which, of course, is not always a test of value, or of real impressiveness. With the exception of Jefferson, he is the most readable of the statesmen of the Revolutionary period. While his intellect was ever alert, active, and coruscating, it was not high enough or calm enough to look all around any subject, and to take in the whole case as a serious quest for truth. Never could he have been a great judge, or a great historian, or a supreme statesman, or a supreme thinker. He was by nature an orator and an advocate; his frankest discussions of a subject always have the note of partisanship and sophistication.

III.

What, then, to John Adams was the meaning of this incipient rupture between England and America in 1765, over the imposition of the Stamp Act? To him it seemed but one passage in that ancient, world-wide, inappeasable feud which ever rages among men between corporate authority on the one hand, and individualism on the other. Particularly since the advent of Christianity, corporate authority has, according to John Adams, found its most perfect development in the canon and the feudal law,—words which he uses as synonyms for "ecclesiastical and civil tyranny."[1]

[1] "Works," iii. 451.

"By the former of these, the most refined, sublime, extensive, and astonishing constitution of policy that ever was conceived by the mind of man, was framed by the Romish clergy for the aggrandizement of their own order."[1] "In the latter, we find another system, similar in many respects to the former; which, although it was originally formed, perhaps, for the necessary defense of a barbarous people against the inroads and invasions of her neighboring nations, yet for the same purposes of tyranny, cruelty, and lust which had dictated the canon law, it was soon adopted by almost all the princes of Europe, and wrought into the constitutions of their government."[2] The climax of misfortune to mankind was reached when, between the two systems of tyranny above described, a confederacy was established. "It seems to have been even stipulated between them, that the temporal grandees should contribute everything in their power to maintain the ascendency of the priesthood, and that the spiritual grandees in their turn should employ their ascendency over the consciences of the people, in impressing on their minds a blind, implicit obedience to civil magistracy. Thus, as long as this confederacy lasted and the people were held in ignorance, liberty, and with her, knowledge and virtue too, seem to have deserted the earth, and one age of darkness succeeded another, till God in his benign providence raised up the champions who began and conducted the Reformation."[3]

IV.

It was, then, the uprising of individualism against corporate authority which gave us the Reformation, even as it was the Reformation which peopled North America with Englishmen—with Englishmen, that is, who were champions of individualism. "I always consider the settlement of America with reverence and wonder, as the opening of a grand scene and design in Providence for the illumination of

[1] "Works," iii. 449. [2] Ibid. 450. [3] Ibid. 450–451.

the ignorant, and the emancipation of the slavish part of mankind all over the earth."[1] These Englishmen in America "formed their plan both of ecclesiastical and civil government, in direct opposition to the canon and the feudal systems."[2] "Tyranny in every form, shape, and appearance was their disdain and abhorrence."[3] "They saw clearly that popular powers must be placed as a guard, a control, a balance, to the powers of the monarch and the priest, in every government, or else it would soon become the man of sin, the whore of Babylon, the mystery of iniquity, a great and detestable system of fraud, violence, and usurpation. . . . They saw clearly, that of all the nonsense and delusion which had ever passed through the mind of man, none had ever been more extravagant than the notions of absolutions, indelible characters, uninterrupted successions, and the rest of those fantastical ideas derived from the canon law, which had thrown a glare of mystery, sanctity, reverence, and right reverend eminence and holiness, around the idea of a priest, as no mortal could deserve, and as always must, from the constitution of human nature, be dangerous in society. For this reason, they demolished the whole system of diocesan episcopacy; and, deriding, as all reasonable and impartial men must do, the ridiculous fancies of sanctified effluvia from episcopal fingers, they established sacerdotal ordination on the foundation of the Bible and common sense."[4] In like manner, they organized their governments in disdain of the feudal law. They "had an utter contempt of all that dark ribaldry of hereditary, indefeasible right,—the Lord's anointed,—and the divine, miraculous original of government, with which the priesthood had enveloped the feudal monarch in clouds and mysteries, and from whence they had deduced the most mischievous of all doctrines—that of passive obedience and non-resistance. They knew that government was a plain, simple, intelligible thing, founded in nature

[1] "Works," iii. 452 n.
[2] Ibid. 451.
[3] Ibid. 452.
[4] Ibid. 452–454.

and reason, and quite comprehensible by common sense."[1] They knew that "nothing could preserve their posterity from the encroachments of the two systems of tyranny . . . but knowledge diffused generally through the whole body of the people."[2] And the Stamp Act—what is it but a master stroke on behalf of ecclesiastical and civil tyranny, another effort of aggression on the part of the confederated enemies of mankind, a device expressly framed "to strip us in a great measure of the means of knowledge, by loading the press, the colleges, and even an almanac and a newspaper, with restraints and duties; and to introduce the inequalities and dependencies of the feudal system, by taking from the poorer sort of people all their little subsistence, and conferring it on a set of stamp officers, distributors, and their deputies."[3]

Therefore, in taking our stand against the enforcement of the Stamp Act, we are but placing ourselves in that mighty line of heroes and confessors and martyrs who since the beginning of history have done battle for the dignity and happiness of human nature against the leagued assailants of both. Herein, let no one dare to accuse us of being overbold. Nay, "the true source of our sufferings has been our timidity. We have been afraid to think. We have felt a reluctance to examining into the grounds of our privileges, and the extent in which we have an indisputable right to demand them, against all the power and authority on earth."[4] Nor may we be told that this attitude of ours toward Great Britain is unbecoming the children of a fond mother: "Is there not something exceedingly fallacious in the commonplace images of mother country and children colonies? Are we the children of Great Britain, any more than the cities of London, Exeter, and Bath? Are we not brethren and fellow subjects with those in Britain, only under a somewhat different method of legislation, and a totally different method of taxation? But, admitting we

[1] "Works," iii. 452–454.
[2] Ibid. 455.
[3] Ibid. 464.
[4] Ibid. 458–459.

are children, have not children a right to complain when their parents are attempting to break their limbs, to administer poison, or to sell them to enemies for slaves? Let me entreat you to consider, will the mother be pleased when you represent her as deaf to the cries of her children,—when you compare her to the infamous miscreant who lately stood on the gallows for starving her child,—when you resemble her to Lady Macbeth in Shakespeare (I cannot think of it without horror) who

> 'Had given suck, and knew
> How tender 't was to love the babe that milked her,'

but yet who could,

> 'even while 't was smiling in her face,
> Have plucked her nipple from the boneless gums,
> And dashed the brains out.'

"Let us banish for ever from our minds, my countrymen, all such unworthy ideas of the king, his ministry, and parliament. . . . Let us presume, what is in fact true, that the spirit of liberty is as ardent as ever among the body of the nation, though a few individuals may be corrupted. Let us take it for granted, that the same great spirit which once gave Cæsar so warm a reception, which denounced hostilities against John till Magna Charta was signed, which severed the head of Charles the First from his body, and drove James the Second from his kingdom, the same great spirit (may Heaven preserve it till the earth shall be no more) which first seated the great-grandfather of his present most gracious majesty on the throne of Britain, is still alive and active and warm in England; and that the same spirit in America, instead of provoking the inhabitants of that country, will endear us to them for ever, and secure their good-will."[1]

[1] "Works," iii. 461–462.

Such was the teaching, and such the temper, of a series of four essays by John Adams, which were first published, though without his name and without any descriptive title, in the "Boston Gazette," in August, 1765. By their wide range of allusion, their novelty, audacity, eloquence, by the jocular savagery of their sarcasms on things sacred, they easily and quickly produced a stir, and won for themselves considerable notoriety. At the instigation of Thomas Hollis, they were almost immediately reproduced in the "London Chronicle"; and in 1768, also by Hollis's act, they were welded together into a single document, and as such were published in London under the somewhat misleading title of "A Dissertation on the Canon and the Feudal Law."[1]

V.

On the sixth of September, 1765, there appeared in a newspaper published in New London the first of a series of five essays addressed "To the Freemen of the Colony of Connecticut," and traversing in grave tone and with masterful intelligence the troublesome matters thrust upon public attention by the Stamp Act. "It is the most critical season," said the writer, "that ever this colony of America saw,—a time when everything dear to us in this world is at stake."[2] Certainly, if parliament may now begin to encroach upon those ancient rights which were secured to us by royal grants and charters,—these being in reality compacts entered into for a valid consideration,—at what point can the encroachments of parliament be expected to end? If they "have a right to impose a stamp tax, they have a right to lay on us a poll tax, a land tax, a malt tax, a cider tax, a window tax, a smoke tax; and why not tax us for the light

[1] It thus formed the last article in a collection of American political writings entitled "The True Sentiments of America"; but is now most easily accessible in "The Works of John Adams," iii. 445-464.

[2] "The New London Gazette," 6 Sept., 1765.

of the sun, the air we breathe, and the ground we are buried in ?[1] If they have a right to deny us the privilege of trial by juries, they have as good a right to deny us any trials at all, and to vote away our estates and lives at pleasure."[2] Thus, in plain, pungent fashion, level to the common mind, this writer argues against the constitutionality of the Stamp Act as well as of every other form of colonial taxation by the British parliament, exposing at every turn the enormous menace it involves to the most valued rights of Americans —to their very existence, in fact, in any civil rank higher than that of slaves.

Though the authorship of these trenchant essays was at first carefully concealed,[3] they were soon known as the work of a Congregational pastor in Connecticut, Stephen Johnson, sprung from the oldest and best stock in that colony, a graduate of Yale in the class of 1743, a man of pure life, of humane and active sympathy, a sturdy thinker, a strong writer, and of a patriotism so rugged as to show itself on the battlefields of the Revolution as well as in those intellectual combats which led to them. With a boldness which perhaps no other American writer had then equalled, twice in that year, 1765, this Connecticut pastor gave sharp warning to the mother country that if the policy then in vogue should be persisted in, a bloody revolution would follow, and England would suffer "the loss of two millions of the best affected subjects."[4] "We cannot think it within any power to make our rights no rights."[5] "The American

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[1] A similar thrust at taxation, even at the hands of the colonial legislature, had been made in Massachusetts by Samuel Cooper in 1754. Both passages in these American writings mildly anticipate, by half a century or more, the point of Sydney Smith's celebrated witticism on the all-pervasiveness of British taxation. "Works of Sydney Smith," ii. 117.

[2] "The New London Gazette," 6 Sept., 1765.

[3] W. Gordon, "History of the . . . Independence . . . of the U. S.," i. 129.

[4] "The New London Gazette," 4 Oct., 1765; also "Some Important Observations," etc., 19–20.

[5] "The New London Gazette," 11 Oct., 1765.

colonies can't be enslaved and ruined but by their own folly, consent, or inactivity." [1]

VI.

On the fourteenth of October, 1765, while the members of the Stamp Act Congress were in the midst of their labors upon the great problem of the hour, there came from a printing office in Annapolis a pamphlet, of portly dimensions, dealing with the same problem, and doing so with a degree of legal learning, of acumen, and of literary power, which gave to it, both in America and in England, the highest celebrity among the political writings of this period. It was entitled "Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes in the British Colonies, for the Purpose of Raising a Revenue by Act of Parliament." The pamphlet was without the author's name; and, still further to obscure its origin, it bore on the title-page, for the place of publication, merely the words "North America." Moreover, the preface was dated "Virginia,"—another device for throwing the reader off the true scent; for, in reality, Maryland was the colony to which its author belonged, and in which, undoubtedly, his pamphlet was written.[2]

All this machinery for self-occultation failed to accomplish its purpose. The marks which the pamphlet bore of its author's individuality, were too definite and too unusual to

[1] "The New London Gazette," 1 Nov., 1765. For manuscript copies of these five essays as published in the New London paper, I am indebted to the courtesy of Professor E. E. Salisbury of Yale University. Other writings of Johnson which I have met with are: "Some Important Observations Occasioned by and Adapted to the Public Fast," December 18, 1765, published at Newport in the following year; the Election Sermon before the General Assembly of Connecticut, 1770; and "The Everlasting Punishment of the Ungodly," New London, 1786,—an able theological treatise of nearly four hundred pages, written in a spirit of candor and moderation.

[2] The copy used by me is a London reprint of 1766, calling itself "Second edition." I have seen at the Lenox Library a copy bearing the imprint "Annapolis, 1765," and likewise calling itself "Second edition." In the same library, is a copy of a New York reprint of the year 1765.

permit him to remain long undiscovered. The men then living in the colonies who were capable of handling such a problem in such a manner, were not many and could not be obscure; and, before very long, it was everywhere known as the work of Daniel Dulany, then the foremost lawyer of Maryland, for many years the secretary of the province, and one of its most accomplished and influential citizens. Born in Maryland in 1721, Daniel Dulany had been sent to England for his education, which he received at Eton College, at Clare Hall, Cambridge, and at the Temple. Returning in due time to his native colony, he was admitted to the bar in 1747, his own father being at that time one of its most eminent members. It was not many years before his own extraordinary abilities and his lofty personal character raised him to the very head of his profession not only in Maryland but in the middle colonies. His authority was so great that the courts of his own province were accustomed to submit to him the most difficult questions which came before them; his opinion was also sought from England upon abstruse matters of law; while in some parts of Virginia it was no unusual thing for cases to be withdrawn from their own courts, and even from the hands of the Lord Chancellor in England, in order to leave them to him for settlement.[1] Finally, his great gifts for the understanding of the law, were accompanied by those which contribute to its persuasive exposition,—powerful oratory, felicity of literary allusion, and a fine and gracious personality. William Pinkney, who could have known Dulany only in his later years and who had a familiar acquaintance also with the great orators of England near the close of the eighteenth century, is said to have been of the opinion "that even amongst such men as Fox, Pitt, and Sheridan," was no one superior to this barrister in an American province.[2]

[1] McMahon, "An Hist. View of the Government of Maryland," i. 356 n.

[2] Ibid. 356–357 n. Some additional facts relating to Dulany may be found in Scharf, "History of Maryland," i. 544–546; and especially in a monograph by John H. B. Latrobe, entitled "Biographical Sketch of Daniel Dulany," published in "The Pa. Mag. of History and Biography," iii. 1–10.

VII.

The logical expertness of Dulany as a debater is apparent in the skill with which, at the beginning of his pamphlet, he fixes the true issue. For, in the very preamble of the Stamp Act, he finds an assumption which seems to him to lie at the bottom of every question in dispute between the colonies and the mother country: it is the assumption whereon parliament undertakes to "give and grant" certain portions of the property of the people of America. "What right had the commons of Great Britain to be thus munificent at the expense of the commons of America?"[1] Upon one point, at least, all parties are agreed, namely, that nowhere can British subjects be taxed except "with their own consent given by their representatives."[2] Are, then, the commons of Great Britain the representatives of the people of America? It is not pretended that we have ever elected any members of the house of commons. How, then, can the members of that house be our representatives? The answer is, that this is a case of virtual representation,—precisely such representation as subsists between the house of commons and the vast majority of the people of Great Britain itself, who likewise have no votes for members of that body. Now, this non-voting majority of the people of Great Britain, though not actually represented in the house of commons, are understood to be virtually represented by that house; and they accept the relation as a valid, even if imperfect, compliance with the old constitutional maxim, and submit themselves, accordingly, to such taxes as are imposed upon them by parliament. But, as regards the privilege of voting for members of parliament, the situation of those British subjects in Great Britain is the same as that of all British subjects in America; and, consequently, though the latter are not actually, they are virtually, represented by the house of commons; hence, they also should accept this virtual

[1] "Considerations on the Propriety," etc., 1–2. [2] Ibid. 2.

representation as a valid compliance with the old constitutional maxim, and should submit themselves to the taxes that may be laid upon them by the imperial legislature, which represents them and their interests as truly as it does the vast non-voting population of the mother country.

This imposing analogy between the situation, and therefore between the obligations, of the non-voting people of Great Britain and the non-voting people of America, it is the chief purpose of Dulany's pamphlet to break down and destroy,—as resting on an argument which, in his opinion, "is totally defective," since "it consists of facts not true, and of conclusions inadmissible."[1] "I shall," he says, "undertake to disprove the supposed similarity of situation, whence the same kind of representation is deduced of the inhabitants of the colonies, and of the British non-electors; and if I succeed, the notion of a virtual representation of the colonies must fail,—which, in truth, is a mere cobweb spread to catch the unwary, and to entangle the weak." Accordingly, he goes on to point out a number of particulars in which the situation of the America non-electors is radically different from that of the British non-electors. Thus, in Great Britain, the interests "of the non-electors, the electors, and the representatives, are individually the same, to say nothing of the connection among neighbors, friends, and relations. The security of the non-electors against oppression is that their oppression will fall also upon the electors and the representatives. The one can't be injured, and the other indemnified. Further, if the non-electors should not be taxed by the British parliament, they would not be taxed at all; and it would be iniquitous, as well as a solecism in the political system, that they should partake of all the benefits resulting from the imposition and application of taxes, and derive an immunity from the circumstance of not being qualified to vote. Under this constitution, then, a double or virtual representation may be reasonably supposed. The electors, who are inseparably connected in their

[1] "Considerations on the Propriety," etc., 3.

interests with the non-electors, may be justly deemed to be the representatives of the non-electors, at the same time they exercise their personal privilege in their right of election, and the members chosen, therefore, the representatives of both."[1] On the other hand, "the inhabitants of the colonies are, as such, incapable of being electors, the privilege of election being exercisable only in person; and, therefore, if every inhabitant of America had the requisite freehold, not one could vote, but upon the supposition of his ceasing to be an inhabitant of America and becoming a resident in Great Britain,—a supposition which would be impertinent, because it shifts the question."[2] Furthermore, "should the colonies not be taxed by parliamentary impositions, their respective legislatures have a regular, adequate, and constitutional authority to tax them; and, therefore, there would not necessarily be an iniquitous and absurd exemption, from their not being represented by the house of commons."[3] Finally, "there is not that intimate and inseparable relation between the electors of Great Britain and the inhabitants of the colonies, which must inevitably involve both in the same taxation. On the contrary, not a single actual elector in England might be immediately affected by a taxation in America, imposed by a statute which would have a general operation and effect upon the properties of the inhabitants of the colonies. The latter might be oppressed in a thousand shapes, without any sympathy, or exciting any alarm in the former. Moreover, even acts oppressive and injurious to the colonies in an extreme degree, might become popular in England, from the promise or expectation that the very measures which depressed the colonies, would give ease to the inhabitants of Great Britain. It is, indeed, true that the interests of England and the colonies are allied, and an injury to the colonies, produced into all its consequences, will eventually affect the mother country. Yet, these consequences, being generally remote, are not at once foreseen; they do not

[1] "Considerations on the Propriety," etc., 4–5. [2] Ibid. 9. [3] Ibid.

immediately alarm the fears and engage the passions of the English electors,—the connection between a freeholder of Great Britain and a British American being deducible only through a train of reasoning which few will take the trouble, or can have an opportunity, if they have capacity, to investigate. Wherefore, the relation between the British Americans and the English electors is a knot too infirm to be relied on as a competent security, especially against the force of a present, counteracting expectation of relief." In conclusion, then, "if the commons of Great Britain have no right by the constitution to 'give and grant' property not belonging to themselves but to others, without their consent actually or virtually given; . . . if it appears that the colonies are not actually represented by the commons of Great Britain, and that the notion of a double or virtual representation doth not with any propriety apply to the people of America; then the principle of the Stamp Act must be given up as indefensible on the point of representation, and the validity of it rested upon the power which they who framed it, have to carry it into execution." [1]

VIII.

Having, by this brilliant stroke of debating ability, broken the very centre of the enemy's line—their famous doctrine of virtual representation—Dulany finds himself for a moment embarrassed by the very extent of his own success. Has he not proved too much? For, if the colonies may not be taxed without being either actually or virtually represented, and if, indeed, they are represented neither actually nor virtually, then the alarming inference seems to follow, that "the subordination or dependence of the colonies, and the superintendence of the British parliament, cannot be consistently established." [2] If, indeed, he has proved all that, he has proved far more than either he or his fellow colonists had then desired to prove, and far more, of

[1] "Considerations on the Propriety," etc., 9–11. [2] Ibid. 15.

course, than their fellow subjects in Great Britain can hear of without abhorrence and dismay. To meet this embarrassment, is his next important step. Does, then, the denial of the right of parliament to tax unrepresented colonies, involve the denial of the general authority of parliament over them? By no means. The real question at issue is not one of all power or none, but merely of power sufficient for the unity and welfare of the whole empire. Surely, the general authority of parliament may be exerted to every useful purpose required for the due subordination of the unrepresented colonies, without proceeding to the extent of laying taxes upon them. Who does not see that parliament may leave to the colonies their ancient privilege of taxing themselves for the general support of the empire, without by that act dissolving the connection of those colonies with the empire, or their due allegiance to the empire? "May not, then, the line be distinctly and justly drawn between such acts as are necessary or proper for preserving or securing the dependence of the colonies, and such as are not necessary or proper for that very important purpose?"[1] "Because the parliament may, when the relation between Great Britain and her colonies calls for an exertion of her superintendence, bind the colonies by statute, therefore a parliamentary interposition in every other instance is justifiable,—is an inference that may be denied."[2] "If, moreover, Great Britain hath an equitable claim to the contribution of the colonies, it ought to be proportioned to their circumstances; and they might, surely, be indulged with discharging it in the most easy and satisfactory manner to themselves. If ways and means convenient and conciliating would produce their contribution, as well as oppressive and disgusting exactions, it is neither consistent with humanity nor policy to pursue the latter. A power may even exist without an actual exercise of it; and it indicates as little good sense as good nature to exercise it, only that the subjects of it may feel the rod that rules them."[3]

[1] "Considerations on the Propriety," etc., 17. [2] Ibid. 18. [3] Ibid. 24.

But what, finally, is the practical use which this powerful debater would make of his apparent victory over the advocates of parliamentary taxation? He seems to have shown that the theory of a virtual representation of the colonies is untenable. What then? In case parliament should still persist in taxing those colonies, what course of action does Daniel Dulany recommend to them? A nullification of such acts of parliament? A total rejection of the authority of parliament? Armed resistance? Revolution? Independence? Heaven forbid! "I would be understood. I am upon a question of propriety, not of power; and though some may be inclined to think it is to little purpose to discuss the one, when the other is irresistible, yet are they different considerations; and, at the same time that I invalidate the claim upon which it is founded, I may very consistently recommend a submission to the law—whilst it endures."[1]

And is this all? Nay, but while we make no unlawful resistance to the authority of parliament, we should so shape our affairs as to render such an exertion of its authority quite unprofitable to those who have advised it. "If in consequence of . . . the imposition of taxes upon their properties, the colonies should only be driven to observe the strictest maxims of frugality, . . . to use new methods of industry, and to have recourse to arts for a supply of necessaries, the difficulty in succeeding would prove less than the apprehension of miscarrying, and the benefit greater than the hope of it."[2] "For food, thank God, they do not, and for raiment they need not, depend upon Great Britain."[3] "Let the manufacture of America be the symbol of dignity, the badge of virtue, and it will soon break the fetters of distress. A garment of linsey-woolsey, when made the distinction of real patriotism, is more honorable and attractive of respect and veneration, than all the pageantry, and the robes, and the plumes, and the diadem

[1] "Considerations on the Propriety," etc., 4.
[2] Ibid. 63–64. [3] Ibid. 64–65.

of an emperor without it. Let the emulation be not in the richness and variety of foreign productions, but in the improvement and perfection of our own. Let it be demonstrated that the subjects of the British empire in Europe and America are the same—that the hardships of the latter will ever recoil upon the former.

"In theory it is supposed that each is equally important to the other,—that all partake of the adversity and depression of any. The theory is just, and time will certainly establish it. But if another principle should be ever hereafter adopted in practice, and a violation, deliberate, cruel, ungrateful, and attended with every circumstance of provocation, be offered to our fundamental rights, why should we leave it to the slow advances of time . . . to prove what might be demonstrated immediately? Instead of moping, and puling, and whining, to excite compassion, in such a situation we ought with spirit, and vigor, and alacrity, to bid defiance to tyranny, by exposing its impotence, by making it as contemptible as it would be detestable. By a vigorous application to manufactures, the consequence of oppression in the colonies, to the inhabitants of Great Britain, would strike home, and immediately, and none would mistake it. Craft and subtlety would not be able to impose on the most ignorant and credulous; for, if any should be so weak of sight as not to see, they would not be so callous as not to feel it. Such conduct would be the most dutiful and beneficial to the mother country. It would point out the distemper when the remedy might be easy, and a cure at once effected by a simple alteration of regimen."[1] "In common life, a tameness in bearing a deprivation of part of a man's property, encourages rapacity to seize the rest."[2] "Any oppression of the colonies would intimate an opinion of them I am persuaded they do not deserve, and their security, as well as honor, ought to engage them to confute."[3] "If the case supposed should

[1] "Considerations on the Propriety," etc., 66–67.
[2] Ibid, 68. [3] Ibid.

really happen, the resentment I should recommend would be a legal, orderly, and prudent resentment, to be expressed in a zealous and vigorous industry, in an immediate use and unabating application of the advantages we derive from our situation." [1]

IX.

To the plan of American opposition thus outlined by Daniel Dulany—that of denying the propriety of parliamentary taxation, while resorting to all manly and lawful measures for convincing parliament of the impolicy of such taxation—to this plan, he himself remained faithful through the remainder of the conflict. When, however, his fellow colonists passed the bounds of constitutional opposition and resorted to measures which were seditious and revolutionary, he declined, with perfect consistency, to take any further part in the movement; and for this he was bitterly denounced as a Tory, his property was confiscated, and the safety of his person imperilled. Though he could not join with those of his fellow colonists who had resolved upon measures which seemed to him to be unwise and unjustifiable, neither could he bring himself to take up arms against them. He therefore went into complete seclusion, from which he never afterward emerged.

There can be no doubt that the line of colonial policy thus advocated by Daniel Dulany, with so much legal ability and with so much literary skill, made a deep impression upon a vast number of his fellow colonists, whom it convinced of the duty and the wisdom of making a fearless stand against the measures of the ministry, but without any rupture of allegiance. It is apparent, also, that the learning, the logical force, the boldness, and the fair-mindedness of Dulany's pamphlet had no small effect upon the leaders of liberal politics in England, and especially upon William Pitt, all of whom it seems to have aided in

[1] "Considerations on the Propriety," etc., 68–69.

defining and justifying the policy which they themselves should advocate in parliament with respect to the American colonies. For example, on the fourteenth of January, 1766, just three months after the publication of Dulany's pamphlet, Pitt appeared in the house of commons for the first time after a long absence, and spoke with tremendous power in favor both of an immediate repeal of the Stamp Act, and of the final abandonment of all measures looking towards the taxation of the colonies by parliament. In one of the speeches which he made in the course of that debate, he held up Dulany's pamphlet to the approval and the admiration of the imperial legislature; and though but a meagre outline of his speech is now in existence, even from such outline it is made clear that in all but one of the great features of his argument as to the constitutional relations of Great Britain to her colonies, he followed the very line of reasoning set forth by Daniel Dulany,—an old Eton boy like himself.[1]

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[1] This may be sufficiently shown by the following passages from Dulany's pamphlet on the one hand, and from the outline of Pitt's speeches on the other :—

DULANY.

"In the constitution of England, the three principal forms of government, monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, are blended together in certain proportions ; but each of these orders, in the exercise of the legislative authority, hath its peculiar department, from which the others are excluded. In this division, the granting of supplies, or laying taxes, is deemed to be the province of the house of commons, as the representative of the people. All supplies are supposed to flow from their gift ; and the other orders are permitted only to assent or reject generally, not to propose any modification, amendment, or partial alteration of it." i.

PITT.

"In legislation, the three estates of the realm are alike concerned, but the concurrence of the peers and the crown to a tax is only necessary to close with the form of a law. The gift and grant is of the commons alone." Hansard, "Parl. Hist.," xvi. 99.

DULANY.

"For the preamble sets forth, that the commons of Great Britain had resolved to 'give and grant' the several rates and duties imposed by the act. But

X.

No other American writings, in immediate response to the passage of the Stamp Act, are stronger in thought, or nobler in form, or more precious to us now as authentic utterances of the very mind and conscience and heart of the American people in that awful crisis of their affairs, than are the several papers put forth by the Stamp Act Congress,—a renowned assemblage, which was convened in the city of New York, and which transacted its entire work within the space of seventeen days of the month of October, 1765. Its public papers consist, in the first place, of fourteen formal declarations of rights and grievances; and, in the second

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what right had the commons of Great Britain to be thus munificent at the expense of the commons of America?" 1–2.

PITT.

"When, therefore, in this house we 'give and grant,' we 'give and grant' what is our own. But in an American tax, what do we do? We, your majesty's commons of Great Britain, 'give and grant' to your majesty—what? Our own property? No. We 'give and grant' to your majesty the property of your majesty's commons of America. It is an absurdity in terms." Hansard, xvi. 99–100.

DULANY.

"The notion of a virtual representation of the colonies . . . is a mere cobweb, spread to catch the unwary, and entangle the weak." 4.

PITT.

"The idea of a virtual representation of America in this house, is the most contemptible idea that ever entered into the head of a man: it does not deserve a serious refutation." Hansard, xvi. 100.

DULANY.

"By their constitutions of government, the colonies are empowered to impose internal taxes." 17. "The right of exemption from all taxes without their consent, the colonies claim as British subjects. They derive this right from the common law, which their charters have declared and confirmed; and they conceive that when stripped of this right, . . . they are at the same time deprived of every privilege distinguishing free men from slaves. On the other hand, they acknowledge themselves to be subordinate to the mother country,

place, of three elaborate addresses, one to the king, one to the house of lords, and one to the house of commons.[1]

He who would truly estimate the moral as well as the intellectual quality of American resistance to the claims of the British parliament, at the moment when the issue was first squarely made and met, will find it needful to read these official announcements of political faith touching imperial problems, the first ever issued by an inter-colonial body of American-Englishmen, then for the first time united against a common danger, and standing up, as their ancestors in the old home had often done before them, against dangerous encroachments upon their rights. Expressed in legal and constitutional language, and employing many of those aphorisms of justice and of civic courage which had been freely used by Englishmen ever since Magna Charta—exactly five hundred and fifty years before—they constitute the first group in that wonderful series of state-papers which the American colonists, speaking through their official representatives, sent forth to the world during the period of their Revolution. In whatever light we may view them,

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and that the authority vested in the supreme council of the nation may be justly exercised to support and preserve that subordination." 37. "But though the right of the superior to use the proper means for preserving the subordination of his inferior is admitted, yet it does not necessarily follow, that he has a right to seize the property of his inferior when he pleases." 16. "May not, then, the line be distinctly and justly drawn between such acts as are necessary or proper for preserving or securing the dependence of the colonies, and such as are not necessary or proper for that very important purpose?" 17.

PITT.

"The commons of America, represented in their several assemblies, have ever been in possession of the exercise of this, their constitutional right, of 'giving and granting' their own money. They would have been slaves if they had not enjoyed it. At the same time, this kingdom, as the supreme governing and legislative power, has always bound the colonies by her laws, by her regulations and restrictions in trade, in navigation, in manufactures, in everything —except that of taking their money out of their pockets without their consent. Here I would draw the line. 'Quam ultra citraque nequit consitere rectum.'" Hansard, xvi. 100.

[1] All reprinted in Niles, "Principles and Acts of the Revolution," 457–460.

these papers of the Stamp Act Congress are masterly and impressive pieces of political statement,—learned, wise, firm, temperate, conservative, even reverent, — as far removed from truculence as from fear. As mere indices of personal character, as materials on which to frame a wise and safe imperial policy, they should have been invaluable to the leaders of English statesmanship at that time. Obviously, a people capable of such political statements were of stuff unfit to make slaves of. Had the king of England been equal to his great opportunity, he would have recognized these men as politicians too clear-headed to be caught by any sophisms of prerogative, as subjects too self-respecting to lie down in quiet under the violation of their ancient rights; and, instead of trying to trample them into any sort of political subordination, he would have made haste to welcome them, for the loftiness and efficiency of their characters, to the fullest privileges of the empire.

XI.

In December, 1765, in the midst of the ferment occasioned by the fact that the Stamp Act, which was then nominally in force in all the American colonies, was practically nullified in thirteen of them, there appeared in Philadelphia, in opposition to the policy out of which that Act had sprung, a notable pamphlet, the peculiar strength of which lay in its good sense united with good humor and expressed in good English. It was entitled "The Late Regulations respecting the British Colonies on the Continent of America, Considered in a Letter from a Gentleman in Philadelphia to his Friend in London." It was immediately republished in London; and "though," as a contemporary observer wrote, "the town has been in a manner glutted with pamphlets on America, yet its sale has been rapid. It . . . has gained the author much reputation."[1] The author, whose reputation as a political writer

[1] Quoted in Dickinson's "Political Writings," Ford ed., i. 210.

was thus breaking upon the world, was John Dickinson, who, as a member of the Stamp Act Congress, had drafted at least two of its public papers, and whose later literary services on behalf of the Revolution were so brilliant as to win for him the title of its "Penman."

Early in the year 1766, and before the hope of a speedy repeal of the offensive Stamp Act had reached these shores, there was published in New York another striking pamphlet on the same side of the question, bearing some of the earmarks of John Dickinson, though perhaps bolder in thought and more trenchant in phrase: "Considerations upon the Rights of the Colonists to the Privileges of British Subjects, introduced by a Brief Review of the Rise and Progress of English Liberty, and concluded with some Remarks upon our Present Alarming Situation." The real aim of this writer comes out in his open avowal of that doctrine of Nullification which was already going into practice there amid multitudinous curses and groans: "Let us at once boldly plead to the jurisdiction of parliament. Let us totally disallow the force of that Act so evidently calculated to enslave us." [1]

XII.

While the Americans in America were thus pondering the anxious problems thrust upon them by the new taxing-policy of the mother country, it happened that an American man of letters, just then in London, was moved by the same cause to give utterance to his own indignant emotion, in the form of a somewhat pugnacious satire in verse, entitled "Oppression." [2] This poem, which bears on every

[1] "Considerations," etc., 25–26.

[2] A copy of the original London edition is in the Harvard library, where I first read it; but it happens that my quotations are from the Boston reprint of the same year, now in the library of the Mass. Hist. Society, where I read it the second time. Sabin speaks of a New York reprint, also of the year 1765; but of this edition I have seen no copy. Hildeburn gives the title, and suggests a Philadelphia reprint.

page the note of Charles Churchill, was probably written in the latter part of 1764. It made its first appearance in London in 1765. The author, not revealing his name, but describing himself as

> "An uncouth genius from a western wood,
> Who 've neither wealth, election votes to bribe,
> Nor will to hackney falsehood for a tribe," [1]

has been watching with alarm and indignation the arbitrary measures and the corrupt methods of the court and parliament, all under the malefic leadership of Lord Bute. As a British subject, he feels the disaster which all this threatens to public and private life in the mother land,—to the very integrity and benignity of the imperial constitution itself; but as a British subject of American birth and connections, he is simply enraged to see with what frivolity, in what a riot of wantonness and scorn, the most sacred rights, the dearest interests, of his far-off and unvoiced fellow colonists are here bartered away. This, then, is the broad ground and justification of his satiric wrath:—

> "When gathering murmurs spread throughout the realm,
> And favorite pilots bungle at the helm;
> When tyrants skulk behind a gracious throne,
> And practice—what their courage dare not own;
> When ministers like screening Grenville rule,—
> A pendant talker and a Butean tool;
> When law is chained, when Mansfield holds the rod,
> And justice trembles at his partial nod;
> When naught but fawning, flattery and lies
> Are the just emblems of our brave and wise;
> . . . . . .
> When countries groan beneath Oppression's hand,
> And pensioned blockheads riot through the land;
> When colonies a savage excise pay,
> To feed the creatures of a motley day;
> . . . . . .

[1] "Oppresion," 4–5.

When dunce on dunce successive rules our state,
Who can't love Pitt, and who a Grenville hate?
When all these ills, and thousands yet untold,
Destroy our liberty, and rob our gold,
Should not then Satire bite with all its rage,
And just resentment glow through every page?
Who can indignant bear to hear such crimes,
And not commence an author of the times?"[1]

But, in the very sordidness and hypocrisy of politics about the court, and in the facility with which the claims of America have been betrayed there even by her own sons, there seems to him to be the added and most impressive reason why he, an American in England, should not succumb to influences that would either keep him silent, or make him false:

"And shall I mingle with the courtly throng,
When truth and reason tell me they are wrong?
Or, if poetic madness seize my brain,
Shall I not rhyme, when conscience guides my strain?
Shall I subscribe to every dunce's nod,
Call Pitt a villain, or Lord Bute a god?
. . . . . .

Shall I extol the late severe excise,
Call it mere naught, and damn myself by lies?
Shall I my country, at thy distant call,
Not mark vile H . . .[2] that first proposed thy fall?

[1] "Oppression," 1–2.

[2] The person thus bitterly referred to as a renegade American, would be easily identified at the time as John Huske, a native of New Hampshire, then a merchant in London, a member of parliament from Malden, and for his supposed activity in bringing about the Stamp Act greatly detested in America. His effigy, with that of Grenville, was hung upon the Tree of Liberty in Boston in 1765. Hutchinson, "History of Massachusetts, iii. 135. These suspicions against him may have been unfounded. At any rate, he was active in bringing about the repeal of the Stamp Act. During Franklin's examination before the house of commons, Huske was one of the members who by their questions tried to aid in developing the testimony so as to tell in favor of the American cause. Franklin described him as a "friend." "Works of Franklin," Bigelow ed., iii. 451.

Or shall I turn a traitor to my clime,
And be, like him, accursed to latest time?
. . . . . .
I want no places at a servile court,
To be the dupe of ministerial sport;
Where honesty sincere but seldom dwells;
Where every tongue with adulation swells;
Where great fools smile, though greater fools may laugh;
Where fawns our H . . . at best a mere state calf;
Where miscreants in every scene of strife,
Get bread, for bastards and themselves, for life;
Where favorite falsehood only seems to charm,
And statesmen promise never to perform;
. . . . . .
Where public virtue meets with abject hate,
Gives way to pleasure and intrigues of state;
Where men devoid of decency as grace,
Get titles, pensions, perquisites, and place;
Where every ill that now annoys our state,
Have their fell source—from thence their baleful date."[1]

Following the precedent then abundantly established among English writers in opposition, this American satirist proceeds to single out and to imprecate Lord Bute as the author and the arch manipulator of all these political woes, particularly of the vexations and calamities now brought upon America:

"Do not our shores now swarm by your command,
With licensed officers by sea and land?—
A crew more dreadful than our savage foes,
A locust tribe that feed on others' woes?"[2]

And this execrable colonial policy that

"half the Western World annoys,
That mars their trade, their liberty destroys,
That makes them slaves, or mere mechanic tools
To work for nought, as fools do work for fools,"[3]

[1] "Oppression," 3–5. [2] Ibid. 13–14. [3] Ibid. 10.

is in no way redeemed by the method of its administration in America at the hands of Lord Bute's hirelings, who, indeed, contrive by their insolence to crown the whole system with the last refinements of vexation:—

> "Must it not fill all men of sense with scorn,
> To see a muckworm of the earth low born,—
> A creature but at best a custom clerk,
> The chance production of some amorous spark,
> In ignorance supreme, profoundly dark,—
> To see him seat his mighty self in state,
> With arms akimbo deal to each his fate;
> To see the hornèd scribbler force along
> And elbow here and there the busy throng?
> What awful consequence transforms his face,
> To show the importance of his mighty place,
> As if in him all excise solely hung,
> And fates of kingdoms balanced on his tongue!"[1]

But, now, these wrongs, great or petty, inflicted upon the colonies by the hard policy of Lord Bute,—all these stings and stabs of oppression,—how long can America be expected to endure them? The poet's answer to that question takes the form of a prophecy which to us may seem almost droll in its moderation, but which may also have an interest for us as being a very early example of those numerous hypothetical Declarations of Independence which were pronounced during the ten or twelve years preceding the real one, and which unconsciously heralded its advent:—

> "Ere five score years have run their tedious rounds,—
> If yet Oppression breaks o'er human bounds,
> As it has done the last sad passing year,
> Made the New World in anger shed the tear,—
> Unmindful of their native, once-loved isle,
> They 'll bid Allegiance cease her peaceful smile,
> While from their arms they tear Oppression's chain,
> And make lost Liberty once more to reign."[2]

[1] "Oppression," 15–16. [2] Ibid. 21.

Yet not with such a menace could even this fierce lover of liberty permit his satire to close; and in a relenting strain which has in it the very pathos of filial supplication, he affirms the affectionate fidelity of the colonies to the empire of which they would gladly remain a part:—

"But let them live, as they would choose to be,
Loyal to king, and as true Britons free,
They 'll ne'er by fell revolt oppose that crown
Which first has raised them, though now pulls them down;
If but the rights of subjects they receive,
'T is all they ask—or all a crown can give." [1]

[1] Ibid. 22. Excepting the citation of the title of this notable poem, as given by Sabin and by Hildeburn, I do not remember to have seen any allusion to it by any writer. I first stumbled upon it at the Harvard library, and could not fail to observe its political and literary significance in relation to the subject of this book. Neither Hildeburn nor Sabin has anything to suggest as to its author. I am inclined, from internal evidence, to attribute it to the once celebrated Arthur Lee, who was born in Virginia in 1740, was educated at Eton College and at the University of Edinburgh, and having settled as a physician in his native colony, went back to England at the outbreak of the great dispute intending to become a lawyer and a politician. His biographer writes very loosely as to dates, and mentions this event as occurring "about the year 1766." "Life of Arthur Lee," by Richard Henry Lee, i. 15. He had a knack both for rhyme and for vituperation; and may have tried, in 1765, to imitate the satire of Churchill, as, a few years later, he tried to imitate the invective of Junius.

CHAPTER VI.

AN EARLY PULPIT-CHAMPION OF COLONIAL RIGHTS: 1766.

I.—Death of Jonathan Mayhew shortly after the repeal of the Stamp Act—His gifts for intellectual and moral leadership—His special influence on the young radicals of the Revolutionary period.

II.—Outline of his career—His early break with New England ecclesiasticism—His activity as a writer—His published writings.

III.—A champion of individualism—His traits as a sermon-writer—His rationalism—His defiance of authority—His demand that religious thinking be practical—His rancorous denunciation of theological rancor.

IV.—His use of the pulpit for the discussion of all topics of the time—The avowed sources of his political opinions—His statesmanlike view of public questions—His political foresight.

V.—His particular antagonism, on behalf of civil liberty, to the Roman and Anglican Churches—A leader in the American crusade against Anglican bishops—Important connection of that excitement with the popular suspicions as to the political purposes of the English government—Mayhew's invective against the Church of England, and especially against bishops.

VI.—His "Discourse concerning Unlimited Submission"—Reflects the influence of Milton's political tracts—Mayhew's ridicule of the saintship and martyrdom of Charles the First—The right of the people to disown and resist bad rulers.

VII.—Immediate effects of Mayhew's preaching on the Stamp Act riots in Boston—His last political discourse, "The Snare Broken," celebrates the repeal of the Stamp Act—His last message to James Otis pleads for a permanent union of the colonies as a defense against evils to come.

I.

On the ninth day of July, 1766,—in the first lull of a political storm which he had done almost as much as any man to raise,—there died in Boston, in his forty-sixth year, Jonathan Mayhew, minister of the West Church in that town; a great master of the art of rational and passionate speech, and for the previous twenty years, from his coigne

of vantage in the pulpit, a robust and fiery antagonist of almost every form of arbitrary authority in church or state; a man of such boldness of character, splendor of diction, wit, sarcasm, invective, of such enthusiasm for all spacious and breezy views of freedom and duty, that he had become a sort of tribune of the people,—particularly, the companion and inspirer of many of those young radicals in politics who, long before the final onset of the American Revolution, were unconsciously beating out a path for it. More than half a century afterward, one of those young radicals —still young at eighty-three—in a review of the beginnings of the Revolutionary movement, fixed upon the years 1760 and 1761 as the time when was produced "an awakening and a revival of American principles and feelings, with an enthusiasm which went on increasing till, in 1775, it burst out in open violence, hostility, and fury. The characters the most conspicuous, the most ardent and influential, in this revival, from 1760 to 1766, were, first and foremost, before all and above all, James Otis; next to him was Oxenbridge Thacher, next to him, Samuel Adams; next to him John Hancock; then, Dr. Mayhew."[1] Another of these young radicals, Robert Treat Paine, carried with him through life such an impression of the greatness of Mayhew as a dauntless pioneer of mental and political emancipation, that, even from a distant retrospect, he named him as "the father of civil and religious liberty in Massachusetts and America."[2] Ninety years after the death of Mayhew, his last successor in the pulpit of the West Church—himself a man of fine genius—described a certain sermon of Mayhew's preached in 1750, as "the first peal on the trumpet of freedom in this western land, blown clear and loud enough to be heard over land and water far and wide."[3] "He had a truly public soul, an ability in action, a genius for affairs, which made him the worthy compeer of all the civil authors

[1] John Adams, "Works," x. 284.

[2] Alden Bradford, "Memoir of the Life and Writings of Rev. Jonathan Mayhew, D.D.," 118 n.

[3] Cyrus Augustus Bartol, "The West Church and its Ministers," 104.

of our national freedom and fundamental institutions; nor does the figure of the elder Samuel Adams or Otis . . . stand out in more distinct relief on the canvas that shows the sublime forms of our political sires, than does that of this religious preacher of the gospel."[1] "I must, for grandeur of aim, and mighty will to bring to pass his purposes, put him in the first rank of human spirits."[2]

And while these tributes bespeak for Mayhew the recognition of posterity for his strong and lofty character—for his purity, nobility, sagacity, and force in practical leadership—they who in his lifetime yielded to his spell, could not refrain from testifying, likewise, to the brilliance of those literary gifts which gave instant splendor and renown to all he did. The writer of a sketch of Mayhew, published just after his death, mentions that he was then generally esteemed "to be as brilliant a genius as ever this country produced."[3] The biographer, John Eliot, a contemporary of Mayhew, speaks of his unsurpassed literary eminence: "No American author ever obtained higher reputation."[4] John Adams, who was not wont either to bless or to curse by halves, does not stick at speaking of Mayhew as a "transcendent genius"[5]; of his writings as sure to be esteemed as long as "wit, spirit, humor, reason, and knowledge" are admired in this part of the world[6]; and of the "wit and satire" that seasoned Mayhew's famous sermon on the saintship and martyrdom of King Charles the First, as "superior to any in Swift or Franklin."[7]

As if conscious that his life was to be a short one, he began to shed its literary fruitage early; and the tone and manner in which he did this, help us to mark some traits of him which his eulogists have not deemed it needful to mention. Never, in his lifetime or since, could he have been

[1] Cyrus Augustus Bartol, "The West Church and its Ministers," 86.

[2] Ibid. 84.

[3] In appendix to Ebenezer Gay's two sermons on the death of Mayhew, Boston, 1766.

[4] "Biographical Dictionary," 323.

[5] "Works," x. 288. [6] Ibid. iv. 29. [7] Ibid. x. 287-288.

spoken of as a representative of any known species of humility, either intellectual or spiritual,—humility being, apparently, one of those Christian graces which he had to content himself with eloquently commending to the practice of others. The special work he had to do in the world, could have been done, perhaps, only by a man unembarrassed by self-distrust or by too much deference for others. From first to last, as we read what he wrote and spoke and printed, we are made aware of a man born with so sumptuous a supply of self-reliance, as to have little room left in him for such qualities as caution, diffidence, hesitation, reverence; a man quite incapable of suspecting that his own illumination on any subject was not a match for that of all other men and of all past ages; his humor, wit, sharpness, severity, affluence, arrogance, and love of applause, finding their opportunity in the large, uncontrolled freedom of a rationalistic pulpit, before which, in that age of universal rupture with the past, there ascended the ceaseless incense of admiration from disciples most grateful to him for his aid in enabling them to form so good an opinion of their own times, and of themselves. In the case of common men, this uncommon self-esteem is apt to be described by words that do not veil its offensiveness. Even in the case of so privileged a person as Mayhew, there were some onlookers who made bold to apply such words to him,—as John Adams's friend, Veasy, who in 1760 ventured the opinion that Dr. Mayhew had "haughty spirits and vanity"[1]; or, as the author of some verses published in 1763, who thus frankly apostrophized that much belauded man:

> "By nature vain, by art made worse,
> And greedy of false fame;
> Through truth disguised, and mobs deceived,
> Thou fain would'st get a name."[2]

[1] J. Adams, "Works," ii. 86.

[2] "Verses on Doctor Mayhew's Book of Observations," etc., 16. The author of these verses is called "a gentleman of Rhode Island," and is said by E. F. Slafter to have been John Alpin.

II.

He was born on the eighth of October, 1720, on the island of Martha's Vineyard, of a line of saintly men who, for three generations before him, had tilled the soil and preached the gospel in that lovely place. He was graduated at Harvard College in 1744, highly distinguished for the ease and elegance with which he wrote Latin, and for his skill in dialectics. Three years after his graduation, he was settled as pastor of the prominent church in Boston, in the service of which he spent his brief life. At his ordination there, the leading clergymen of the neighborhood were conspicuous by their absence,—this being on account of an odor of heterodoxy already perceptible about his person, and in no way lessened as the years went on. He is said to have been the first minister among the New England churches openly to attack and spurn the five great buttresses of the system of John Calvin, and openly to deny the doctrines of the Trinity, and the divinity of Jesus Christ; while the church of which he was pastor, was the first one in that region to avow itself as Unitarian.[1] Standing up thus alone as an incipient heretic in a town then prodigiously devoted both to orthodoxy and to church-going, young Mayhew made from the first a gallant and a winning fight for recognition and influence. He had an eye for the strategic uses of the printing-press as an ally of the pulpit; and while the thoughtfulness, force, and vivacity of his spoken sermons soon made his meeting-house a resort for men and women of advanced ideas—a mart for the exhibition and interchange of many sorts of theological and political novelties —those same sermons, being frequently flung into print and scattered hither and yon in this country and in England, soon lifted his name into a distinction unrivalled, probably, by any of his contemporaries in the American pulpit. Of the industry and fearlessness with which he thus prosecuted his trade of authorship, the reader may judge

[1] Bradford, "Life of Mayhew," 24, 464.

by a mere glance at the long list of his published writings: In 1749,—"Seven Sermons . . . Preached as a Lecture in the West Meeting House"[1]; in 1750,—"A Discourse concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers; With some Reflections on the Resistance made to King Charles the First, and on the Anniversary of his Death,—in which the Mysterious Doctrine of that Prince's Saintship and Martyrdom is unriddled"[2]; in 1751,—"Sermon . . . on the Death of Frederick, Prince of Wales"; in 1754,—the Massachusetts election sermon; in 1755,—"Two Sermons, . . . November 23, . . . Occasioned by the Earthquakes . . . on the Tuesday Morning and Saturday Evening preceding"; "A Discourse . . . Occasioned by the Earthquakes in November, . . . delivered December 18 following"; and a volume of fourteen sermons on subjects of speculative and practical importance[3]; in 1758,—"Two Discourses delivered November 23, . . . being a Day of Public Thanksgiving, relating more especially to the Success of his Majesty's Arms and those of the King of Prussia the last year"; in 1759,—"Two Discourses delivered October 25, . . . being . . . a Day of Public Thanksgiving for the Success of his Majesty's Arms, more particularly in the Reduction of Quebec"; in 1760,—"A Sermon occasioned by the Great Fire in Boston," "Two Discourses delivered October 9, . . . being a Day of Public Thanksgiving for the Success of his Majesty's Arms, more especially in the entire Reduction of Canada," "A Discourse occasioned by the Death of the Honorable Stephen Sewall," and a volume of thirteen "Practical Discourses delivered on Occasion of the Earthquakes in November, 1755"[4]; in 1761,—"A Discourse occasioned by the Death

[1] Reprinted in London, 1750.

[2] Reprinted in Boston, 1818.

[3] Reprinted in London, 1756.

[4] In an advertisement for April 1, 1760, at the end of his sermon on the "Great Fire," this volume is announced as then first published.

of King George the Second, and the Happy Accession of his Majesty King George the Third," and two sermons on "Striving to Enter in at the Strait Gate"; in 1763,—"Two Sermons on the Nature, Extent, and Perfection of the Divine Goodness"; a volume of eight sermons, to young men, on "Christian Sobriety," and a pamphlet entitled "Observations on the Charter and Conduct of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts"; in 1764,—two pamphlets in defense of the one just mentioned and in reply to the criticisms of Archbishop Secker and others, and "A Letter of Reproof to Mr. John Cleaveland of Ipswich, occasioned by a Defamatory Libel published under his Name"; in 1765,—the Dudleian lecture, on "Popish Idolatry"; in 1766,—"The Snare Broken: A Thanksgiving Discourse preached . . . Friday, May 23, 1766, occasioned by the Repeal of the Stamp Act,"—this sermon having been delivered less than seven weeks before its author's death.[1]

III.

Whoever glances through this long series of publications, will be likely to note the early and persistent action of Mayhew's mind in the direction of individualism, on behalf of which he proves himself from first to last a staunch and dashing fighter—a scornful and a merciless one:

> "A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest;
>
> . . . . . .
>
> —— no Sabbath-drawler of old saws
> Distill'd from some worm-canker'd homily;
> But spurred at heart with fiercest energy."

[1] The foregoing list was made by me from the documents themselves, either in my own possession, or in the libraries of Harvard University, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the Congregational House, Boston. A list is given in Sprague, "Annals," etc., viii. 26; and in Bradford, "Life of Mayhew," 29 n.

As to method and form, his sermons have never the quality of mere essays—placid and disinterested statements of thought: they are essentially orations, not to say, fulminations,—their sentences being framed, or rather born, for strong and passionate utterance, and swelling into climaxes of argument and emotion. He has a towering and soaring sort of eloquence. He nobly wields majestic Biblical language. He compacts his pages with edged and pointed diction, concentrated sayings, epigrams. Even in the most serious moods, his discourse is in danger of crackling into caustic humor and satire; so that a sentence begun in solemnity and even pathos may end in a jocular detonation,—the height and triumph of his argument being celebrated at times by flashes and coruscations of intellectual fire, even as the rocket bursts into a shower of sparkling jets at the summit of its flight. As is apt to be the case with such men, he was at times the victim of his own cleverness,—his gift for satire tempting him to indulge it at the expense both of charity and of reverence.[1]

The distinctive trait of Mayhew's work is intellectuality, with fervor and force. For fervor and force without intellectuality, he expresses uncontrollable contempt,—as when in his early ministry, he went one day to hear Whitefield, and then, writing to his father, said of the sermon: "It was as low, confused, puerile, conceited, ill-natured, enthusiastic a performance as I ever heard."[2] Everywhere he insists on the dignity and worth of the intellect in all matters of faith and sentiment. He declares himself to be a rationalist in religion, and Christianity a consummate sys-

[1] Instances of the former may be found in nearly all of his allusions to the Roman and Anglican Churches; and in many of his comments upon his own Protestant antagonists in New England—especially in his "Letter of Reproof" to the Rev. John Cleaveland. Notable examples of the latter are to be met with in his note professing to explain why the "Song of Solomon" was admitted into the sacred canon ("Sermons upon the Following Subjects," etc., 349); and in his parody on the Athanasian creed, for the purpose of ridiculing the alleged deification of the Virgin Mary (Ibid. 323 n.).

[2] Bradford, "Life of Mayhew," 102.

tem of rationalism: "Our anointed Lord, the author and finisher of our faith, constantly appealed to the senses and the reason of mankind, as the proper judges of his miracles, divine commission, and doctrine. He did not demand of men an implicit, blind belief in himself, without offering matter of conviction to their understandings; but put them on examining, in a rational way, whether he were authorized by heaven, or were an impostor, and whether his doctrines were of God, or whether he spake of himself."[1] Mayhew seems always to think with emotion, often with passion, but he thinks; and he requires that they who hear him or read him shall think. Not even the love of God is to be deemed a thing of sentiment only: it is not to be confounded, says Mayhew, with "those flashy and rapturous sallies of the heart towards God, which may proceed from a fond conceit that we are singled out to be the particular favorites of heaven. . . . The love of God is a steady, solemn, calm, and rational thing, the result of thought and consideration. It is, indeed, a passion, but a passion excited by reason presenting the proper object of it to the mind."[2] Constantly, even in times of general excitement, as after an earthquake, or a great fire, or a great tempest,—the entire community then thrilling and throbbing with terror,—this preacher demands that men and women shall keep their heads, and not lose them. On the very morning after the town of Boston had been thrown into consternation by an earthquake—the second one within the space of three days—he went into his pulpit, and said: "It is not my intention to address myself merely to the passions of my hearers, much less to take this opportunity, when the minds of many people may be ruffled and discomposed, to promote the cause of superstition. . . . I shall, therefore, address myself to you as to men and reasonable creatures. . . . And this will so much the rather be the manner of my address, because I am persuaded from

[1] From sermon reprinted in part in Bradford, "Life of Mayhew," 54-55.

[2] "Seven Sermons," etc., 95.

my own observation, that no religious impressions can be of the right kind, durable, and of lasting benefit to the subjects of them, besides those which are made, or at least fixed, by rational, sober, and honest methods, with the concurrence and blessing of Him who worketh all in all." [1]

Of course, the preacher who thus reveres the sovereignty of the intellect, is one who will claim, for himself and for every man, the right to use it freely, even in opposition to all external authority, whether of kings, or bishops, of ancient creeds, ancient churches, or modern ones. In short, here stands before us an uncommonly fierce champion of the right of private judgment,—a right which, he declares, he will never yield up to the authority of "all the good Fathers of the Church, even with that of the good Mothers added to it." [2] "Did I say, we have a right to judge and act for ourselves? It is our solemn duty to do it. We cannot relinquish the right, nor neglect to use it, without being highly culpable. We may dispose of our temporal substance, if we please, but God, and reason, and the gospel of Christ enjoin it upon us, as a duty, to maintain the right of private judgment, and to worship God according to our consciences, as much as they enjoin it on us to give alms to the poor, to love God and our neighbor, and to practise all righteousness. They are all duties, and not simply rights; duties founded in the reason of things; duties equally commanded by the same God; duties equally enjoined by the same Lord; duties equally required by the same gospel. And the neglect of the duty of private judgment, may be attended by worse consequences to ourselves and fellow-men, than the neglect of any other. For he who does not examine for himself what is right and true, acts entirely in the dark, and may run into the most irregular and destructive practices which can be conceived of, just as his weak or wicked guides are pleased to prompt him. He is fit only for a tool to the devil and his emissaries; and

[1] "Two Sermons . . . on Earthquakes," etc., 9–10.

[2] From dedication to volume of "Sermons," published in 1755.

may flatter himself that he is doing God service, when he is imbruing his hands in the blood of the innocent, and persecuting the true church of Christ." [1]

Moreover, while Mayhew insists on the necessity of thought in every sphere of religion, he demands that the chief aim of religious thinking should be not speculative but practical: "Those things which have kept the Christian world in an eternal ferment, which have sharpened the spirits of men, and set little angry bigots a snarling and growling at one another, are nice metaphysical fooleries, scholastic distinctions without any difference, and mere words without a meaning. These are the things—or rather the nothings—which have been disputed about to the neglect of the weightier matters of the gospel, and even to the destruction of all piety and brotherly love—of everything becoming a man and a Christian. So hot and furious have many professed Christians been in all ages, and so wrathful their contentions about nothings or mere trifles, that one unacquainted with the genius of their religion would be apt to think it a very different thing from what it is. He might be apt to think that the Master of these furious, railing, and burning disputants had left it in express charge, as the distinguishing character of his disciples, not that they should 'be wise as serpents and harmless as doves,' not that they should 'love one another,' and practise mutual forbearance and condescension, and do unto all men as they would be done by, but that they should be venomous and malicious as serpents—hate one another with all their hearts—do to every one as they would be willing to be done to by none—go together by the ears about words and sounds—drag each other to gaols and gibbets, to dungeons and flames, and consign all over to hell fire at last who could not immediately pronounce their uncouth shibboleths. But, O blessed Jesus! thou Saviour of the world! is this, for thy disciples to love one another as thou hast loved them? Or didst thou mercifully make peace

[1] From sermon reprinted in part in Bradford, "Life of Mayhew," 71–72.

between God and man by the blood of thy cross, that men, being at peace with God, might thus make war upon one another, and inhumanly shed each other's blood ?'' [1]

IV.

Like nearly all the New England preachers of that day, this preacher by no means confined himself to topics concerning individual thought and conduct, but launched out habitually on Sundays into those great matters of state—civil, ecclesiastical, even military—which his people were thinking about during the week,—the deaths and the coronations of English kings; the rise and fall of English ministries; the conflicts of England with her rivals in all lands and seas; the glorious deeds of Frederick of Prussia as champion of Protestant power throughout the world; the appalling menace to the American colonies presented by the mere existence of French colonies in North America; the alarming aggressions of the English government upon the political rights of Americans; the rightful limits of submission, the rightful spirit and method of resistance, on the part of subjects to their sovereign.

In the very last of his sermons on public questions, Mayhew avows the chief sources of his ideas as to civil liberty, saying that in his youth he had imbibed them from " Plato, Demosthenes, Cicero, and other renowned persons among the ancients," and from Sidney, Milton, Locke, and Hoadly among the moderns; above all, that earlier still he had " learnt from the holy scriptures, that wise, brave, and virtuous men were always friends to liberty; that God gave the Israelites a king, or absolute monarch, in his anger, because they had not sense and virtue enough to like a free commonwealth, and to have Himself for their King; that the Son of God came down from heaven to make us ' free indeed ' ; and that ' where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' '' [2]

[1] " Seven Sermons," etc., 155–156.

[2] " The Snare Broken," 35.

It must be admitted that in his discussion of national and international topics, there is often a statesman-like largeness of view, a dignity and strength of thought, a magnificence of expression, which make his discourse very noble and inspiring. He had such a grasp, also, on the import of passing events, that, at times, his interpretation of them was prophecy; as when, in the Massachusetts election sermon for 1754, he virtually announced the approach of the Seven Years' War, and the final conflict between Englishmen and Frenchmen for the possession of North America: "We are morally sure . . . that there must sooner or later be some great turn of affairs upon this continent, which will put it out of our power, or out of theirs, to dispute about boundaries. . . . We are peaceably extending our settlements upon our own territories; they are extending theirs beyond their own, by force of arms. We must meet at length—which cannot be without violent concussion—and the time seems not to be far off. . . . The continent is not wide enough for both; and they are resolved to have the whole." [1]

V.

In Mayhew's day, almost every question of church was also a question of state; and he believed himself to be battling for the cause of civil liberty in assaulting and execrating, at every opportunity, the Church of Rome and, more especially, the Church of England. The fire, the fury, the venom of his attacks upon these two great bodies of Christians, and, in particular, his expressions of anger and of horror at the possible introduction of Anglican bishops into America, would, in the light of our present knowledge, seem like the ravings of an eloquent maniac, were we not also aware that his words on that subject expressed the sincere thought of multitudes of his most rational contemporaries, and that they set before us, in

[1] Massachusetts election sermon for 1754, 36–37.

most authentic form, one of the chief sources of American alarm, between 1763 and 1775, over the taxing-policy of the English government, and, therefore, one of the profoundest of the remoter causes of the American Revolution. "When we consider," said Mayhew, in 1763, "the real constitution of the Church of England, and how alien her mode of worship is from the simplicity of the gospel, and the apostolic times; when we consider her enormous hierarchy, ascending by various gradations from the dirt to the skies; when we consider the visible effects of that church's prevailing among us, to the degree that it has; when we reflect on what our forefathers suffered from the mitred, lordly successors of the fishermen of Galilee, for nonconformity to a non-instituted mode of worship, which occasioned their flight into this western world; when we consider that, to be delivered from their unholy zeal and oppressions, countenanced by sceptred tyrants, they threw themselves, as it were, into the arms of savages and barbarians; when we reflect that one principal motive to their exchanging the fair cities, villages, and delightful fields of Britain for the then inhospitable shores and deserts of America, was that they might here enjoy unmolested God's holy word and ordinances, without such heterogeneous and spurious mixtures as were offensive to their well-informed consciences; when we consider the narrow, censorious, and bitter spirit that prevails in too many of the Episcopalians among us, and what might probably be the sad consequence, if this growing party should once get the upper hand here and a major vote in our houses of assembly,—in which case the Church of England might become the established religion here, tests be ordained, as in England, to exclude all but conformists from posts of honor and emolument, and all of us be taxed for the support of bishops and their underlings;—when we consider these things, and too many others to be now mentioned, we cannot well think of that church's gaining ground here to any great degree, and especially of seeing bishops fixed among us, without

much reluctance. Will they never let us rest in peace,—except where all the weary are at rest? Is it not enough that they persecuted us out of the Old World? Will they pursue us into the New?—to convert us here, compassing sea and land to make us proselytes, while they neglect the heathen and heathenish plantations? What other New World remains as a sanctuary for us from their oppressions, in case of need? Where is the Columbus to explore one for us, and pilot us to it, before we are consumed by the flames, or deluged in a flood, of Episcopacy?"[1]

VI.

Probably no production of Mayhew's pen is now so interesting as his famous "Discourse concerning Unlimited Submission,"[2] preached on the Sunday immediately after the 30th of January, 1750; none reveals to us more clearly the great features of his mind as a writer, preacher, political thinker; none indicates, in a more comprehensive way, his special contribution to those moral forces which, accumulating in the very heart of American society in the middle of the eighteenth century, bore the American people forward into the audacity of concerted resistance to the prerogative and power of Great Britain. In this discourse, also, perhaps more than in any other of his, one is reminded of Mayhew's own avowal of his interest in the political writ-

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[1] "Observations on the Charter," etc., 155–156. It may afford the reader some amusement—indeed, it should afford him, also, some instruction—to recall the fact, that Jonathan Mayhew's only surviving child, a daughter, became the mother of a man, who, bearing the name and inheriting many of the brilliant gifts of his grandfather, became a distinguished Anglican bishop in America—Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright, of the diocese of New York. It was, in fact, this grandson of Jonathan Mayhew, the bishop-hater, who, replying to the epigram of Rufus Choate, that the Pilgrim Fathers had founded "a state without a king" and "a church without a bishop," made the famous retort: "There is no church without a bishop."

[2] A reprint of this discourse may be seen in John Wingate Thornton, "The Pulpit of the American Revolution," 39–104.

ings of John Milton;—for here, as is apparent, the disciple has caught, not only all of his master's ideas as to bishops and kings, but much of his master's vehement and brilliant scurrility in uttering them.[1] He describes the Anglican commemoration of the death-day of Charles the First, as "the mystery of nonsense as well as iniquity,"[2] and as the result of "an impious bargain struck up betwixt the sceptre and the surplice, for enslaving both the bodies and the souls of men."[3] After a denunciation, not at all self-restrained, of the public and private crimes of the monarch thus annually exalted as a saint and a martyr, the preacher comes, in characteristic fashion, to the climax of his blazing indictment: "King Charles was really a man black with guilt. . . . He lived a tyrant; and it was the oppression and violence of his reign that brought him to his untimely and violent end at last. Now, what of saintship or martyrdom is there in all this? What of saintship is there in encouraging people to profane the Lord's day! What of saintship in falsehood and perjury? What of saintship in repeated robberies and depredations? What of saintship in throwing real saints and glorious patriots into gaols? What of saintship in overturning an excellent civil constitution, and proudly grasping at an illegal and monstrous power? What of saintship in the murder of thousands of innocent people, and involving a nation in all the calamities of a civil war? And what of martyrdom is there in a man's bringing an immature and violent death upon himself, by being wicked overmuch? Is there any such thing as grace, without goodness?—as being a follower of Christ, without following him?—as being his disciple, without learning of him to be just,

[1] Of course, I here refer to "A Defense of the People of England, in Answer to Salmasius's Defense of the King"; to "The Second Defense of the People of England, against an anonymous Libel, entitled 'The Royal Blood crying to Heaven for Vengeance on the English Parricides'"; and to "Eikonoklastes, in Answer to a Book entitled 'Eikon Basilike, the Portraiture of His Sacred Majesty in his Solitudes and Sufferings.'" "The Prose Works of John Milton." London, Henry G. Bohn, volume I.

[2] "Discourse," etc., 51. [3] Ibid. 52.

and beneficent?—or as saintship, without sanctity? If not, I fear it will be hard to prove this man a saint. And, verily, one would be apt to suspect that that church must be but poorly stocked with saints and martyrs, which is forced to adopt such enormous sinners into her calendar, in order to swell the number!" [1] Nevertheless, in Mayhew's opinion, even the colossal absurdity of this commemoration of the death of king Charles the First was to have at least one good result, if it should "prove a standing memento that Britons will not be slaves, and a warning to all corrupt councillors and ministers, not to go too far in advising to arbitrary despotic measures!" [2] Such, in 1750, was Mayhew's unconscious premonitory advice to the future ministers of the future king George the Third.

But to Mayhew's countrymen, far more urgent than the question as to the character of king Charles the First, became the question as to the right of the people to resist, and to put to death, any king, if he be at all as bad a king as that particular one was represented to be. In Mayhew's treatment of that question we find, in most explicit and trenchant form, the idea that made inevitable the armed opposition which, some twenty-five years later, the American subjects of a British king were to institute, and to carry on, against him. In the case before us, the preacher has to meet the argument for unlimited submission to rulers, based on the Scriptural statement that "their power is from God." But, says Mayhew, "rulers have no authority from God to do mischief. . . . It is blasphemy to call tyrants and oppressors God's ministers. They are more properly the messengers of Satan to buffet us. No rulers are properly God's ministers, but such as are 'just, ruling in the fear of God.' When once magistrates are contrary to their office and the end of their institution, when they rob and ruin the public, instead of being guardians of its peace and welfare, they immediately cease to be the 'ordinance' and 'ministers' of God, and no more deserve that

[1] "Discourse," etc., 49–51. [2] Ibid. 54.

glorious character than common pirates and highwaymen."[1] "It will not follow that, because civil government in general is a good institution, and necessary to the peace and happiness of human society, therefore there are no supposable cases in which resistance to it can be innocent."[2] "If it be our duty, for example, to obey our king merely for this reason, that he rules for the public welfare—which is the only argument the apostle makes use of—it follows, by a parity of reasoning, that when he turns tyrant, and makes his subjects his prey to devour and to destroy, instead of his charge to defend and cherish, we are bound to throw off our allegiance to him, and to resist."[3]

VII.

Surely, the preacher who, in the placid times of 1750, could light up in his soul such a flame of consuming wrath merely against hypothetic and imagined tyranny, would be likely to have something warm and enkindling to say when, fifteen years later, there should appear before him in America a form of tyranny which he believed to be actual. Writing to a friend in England, on the eighth of August, 1765, just before the outbreak in Boston of the popular fury against the supposed friends of the Stamp Act, Mayhew put much of his political philosophy into small compass when he pithily remarked, "No people are under a religious obligation to be slaves, if they are able to set themselves at liberty."[4] At such times, speculative statements as to the right of resistance are apt to receive an application rougher and more headstrong than the teacher has in mind; and on the morning after the sack and destruction of Hutchinson's house, one of the rioters confessed that he had been incited to take part in that barbarous proceeding by the sermon which he had heard from Dr. Mayhew on the previous Sunday, from the text,—"I would they were even cut off

[1] "Discourse," etc., 23–24. [2] Ibid. 19. [3] Ibid. 29–30.
[4] Given in Bradford, "Life of Mayhew," 418.

which trouble you. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." [1]

The last political discourse ever uttered by Mayhew was one of great joy,—therein interpreting the general ecstasy of his countrymen over the news of the repeal of the Stamp Act. But to a far-seeing mind like Mayhew's, no joy under such circumstances could be without its deep tinge of solicitude; and on the morning of the second Sunday after this sermon of his on "The Snare Broken," [2] being about to start upon a fatiguing journey which, in fact, brought on the illness that proved fatal to him, he wrote to his friend, James Otis, a hurried note conveying to that kindred soul what proved to be a legacy of incomparable value for all his countrymen,—his statesmanlike project for a permanent union of the American colonies, so recently united by the bond of a common peril:—"To a good man all time is holy enough, and none is too holy, to do good, or to think upon it. Cultivating a good understanding and hearty friendship between these colonies, appears to me so necessary a part of prudence and good policy, that no favorable opportunity for that purpose should be omitted. I think such an one now presents. Would it not be proper and decorous for our assembly to send circulars to all the rest, on the late repeal of the Stamp Act, and the present favorable aspect of affairs . . . expressing a desire to cement and perpetuate union among ourselves, by all laudable methods? . . . It is not safe for the colonies to sleep; for it is

[1] Galatians, v. 12–13. Compare Hutchinson, "History of Massachusetts Bay," iii. 123, with the correspondence between Hutchinson and Mayhew as given in Bradford, "Life of Mayhew," 420–422. Mayhew was horrified at the charge that his preaching had incited to these lawless and savage acts; and he wrote to Hutchinson, "I had rather lose my right hand, than be an encourager of such outrages as were committed last night." He complained, as many a preacher has had to do, before and since, that his congregation, instead of taking the whole text, took that part of it which they liked best.

[2] A reprint of this sermon may be found in "The Patriot Preachers of the American Revolution," 9–48.

probable they will always have some wakeful enemies in Great Britain. But if they should be such children as to do so, I hope there are some, too much of men, and too great friends to them as well as to liberty, to rock the cradle, or to sing lullaby to them. You have heard of the communion of churches; and I am to set out to-morrow morning for Rutland, to assist at an ecclesiastical council. Not expecting to return this week, while I was thinking of this in my bed, the great use and importance of a communion of colonies appeared to me in a strong light,—which led me immediately to set down these hints to transmit to you." [1]

[1] The whole letter is in Bradford, "Life of Mayhew," 428–430.

CHAPTER VII.

DESCRIPTIONS OF NATURE AND MAN IN THE AMERICAN WILDERNESS: 1763–1775.

I.—Captain Jonathan Carver in 1763—His plan for a tour of discovery across the continent of North America—His personal traits—The statesmanlike character of his plan.

II.—Carver's expedition into the Northwest, in 1766 and 1767—Descriptions of the Indians and their lands—His failure.

III.—Carver goes to England in 1769 to publish his discoveries, and to get help to complete them—Why the government refused help—His struggle for existence in England—Publishes his "Travels through the Interior Parts of North America"—Other publications.

IV.—Carver's death in London in great poverty—Public compassion for him after he ceased to need it—Remembrance of him in America and in Europe—The charm and fame of his "Travels"—Schiller's interest in them.

V.—Major Robert Rogers—His "Journal of the Siege of Detroit," in 1763—His two books descriptive of the Indians and the English colonies, 1765.

VI.—"An Historical Account of the Expedition against the Ohio Indians," in 1764—History and character of the book—Its wide diffusion in America and Europe.

VII.—William Stork's "Description of East Florida," 1766—Literary quality of the book—Its optimistic account of reptiles and insects in that country.

VIII.—James Adair's "History of the American Indians," 1775—His book written among the people whom it describes—Its method—The author's theory as to the origin of the Indians—Great value of its direct testimony concerning them—Its manly style—His avowal of sympathy with his fellow-colonists in political and military peril.

I.

In the year 1763, at the close of that famous war which resulted in the acquisition of Canada by the English, there was in New England an enterprising young American soldier, named Jonathan Carver, stranded as it were amid the

threatened inanities of peace and civilization, and confronting a prospect that was for him altogether insipid through its lack of adventure, and especially of barbaric restlessness and discomfort. "I began to consider," so he wrote a few years afterward, "having rendered my country some services during the war, how I might continue still serviceable, and contribute, as much as lay in my power, to make that vast acquisition of territory, gained by Great Britain in North America, advantageous to it. It appeared to me indispensably needful that government should be acquainted, in the first place, with the true state of the dominions they were now become possessed of. To this purpose, I determined, as the next proof of my zeal, to explore the most unknown parts of them, and to spare no trouble or expense in acquiring a knowledge that promised to be so useful to my countrymen. . . . What I chiefly had in view, after gaining a knowledge of the manners, customs, languages, soil, and natural productions of the different nations that inhabit the back of the Mississippi, was to ascertain the breadth of that vast continent, which extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, in its broadest part between forty-three and forty-six degrees northern latitude. Had I been able to accomplish this, I intended to have proposed to government to establish a post in some of those parts about the Straits of Annian, which, having been first discovered by Sir Francis Drake, of course belong to the English. This, I am convinced, would greatly facilitate the discovery of a northwest passage, or a communication between Hudson's Bay and the Pacific Ocean,—an event so desirable, and which has been so often sought for but without success. Besides this important end, a settlement on that extremity of America would answer many good purposes, and repay every expense the establishment of it might occasion. For it would not only disclose new sources of trade, and promote many useful discoveries, but would open a passage for conveying intelligence to China and the English settlements in the East Indies, with greater expedition than a tedious

voyage by the Cape of Good Hope or the Straits of Magellan will allow of." [1]

Here, then, in the latter half of the eighteenth century was an American Englishman in whom shone some of the best traits of Elizabethan Englishmen two centuries before, —strong-limbed and strong-brained men, with a love of letters and a love of deeds, not always content with home-keeping employments, scornful of ease whenever any tough matter was to be attended to, able to fight and to write, to sail a boat into strange seas or to lead a band of hardy men through a wilderness, proud of their country and their race, having the power and the passion to spread afar through the world the sway of both. Certainly, the project thus clearly wrought out in 1763 by this obscure provincial captain in New England, anticipated by forty years the American statesmanship which, under President Jefferson, sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to penetrate the passes of the Rocky Mountains and to pitch their tents by the mouth of the Columbia River; even as it anticipated by a hundred years the Canadian statesmanship which, under Sir John Macdonald, has in our time beaten out an iron way across the continent at its greatest breadth, and has made the waters that splash against Vancouver Island neighborly and friendly to those which ripple under the ramparts of Quebec.

II.

It seems to have taken Carver about three years to complete his preparations for the tremendous enterprise which then inspired him. Not until June, 1766,—in the political lull occasioned by the repeal of the Stamp Act,—was he able to start. After passing Albany, he plunged at once into the wilderness which then stretched its rough dominion over the uncomputed spaces to the western sea,—a realm populous with a set of gentlemen rather too fond, as was

[1] Carver, "Travels through the Interior Parts of North America," Introd. i.–ii.; v.–vi.

supposed, of tampering with the scalps of harmless travelers that might be journeying their way. Having stopped awhile at the English fort at Niagara, he again pushed on until he reached Michillimackinac, "a fort distant from Boston 1300 miles. This being the uttermost of our factories towards the northwest, I considered it as the most convenient place from whence I could begin my intended progress, and enter at once into regions I designed to explore. . . . Having here made the necessary dispositions for pursuing my travels, and obtained a credit from Mr. Rogers, the governor, on some English and Canadian traders who were going to trade on the Mississippi, and received also from him a promise of a fresh supply of goods when I reached the Falls of St. Anthony, I left the fort on the third of September, in company with these traders. It was agreed that they should furnish me with such goods as I might want for the presents to the Indian chiefs, during my continuance with them, agreeable to the governor's order. But when I arrived at the extent of their route, I was to find other guides, and to depend on the goods the governor had promised to supply me with." [1]

Setting out from Michillimackinac in canoes, he and his companions arrived in fifteen days at those beautiful islands which are strung along the entrance of Green Bay. "On the largest and best of these islands stands a town of the Ottawas, at which I found one of the most considerable chiefs of that nation, who received me with every honor he could possibly show to a stranger. But what appeared extremely singular to me at the time . . . was the reception I met with on landing. As our canoes approached the shore, and had reached within about three-score rods of it, the Indians began a feu-de-joie in which they fired their pieces loaded with balls; but at the same time they took care to discharge them in such a manner as to fly a few yards above our heads. During this they ran from one tree or stump to another, shouting and behaving as if they

[1] "Travels," etc., 17, 20–21.

were in the heat of battle. At first, I was greatly surprised, and was on the point of ordering my attendants to return their fire, concluding that their intentions were hostile; but being undeceived by some of the traders, who informed me that this was their usual method of receiving the chiefs of other nations, I considered it in its true light, and was pleased with the respect thus paid me.

"I remained here one night. Among the presents I made the chiefs, were some spirituous liquors, with which they made themselves merry; and all joined in a dance that lasted the greater part of the night. In the morning when I departed, the chief attended me to the shore, and, as soon as I had embarked, offered up, in an audible voice and with great solemnity, a fervent prayer in my behalf. He prayed that the Great Spirit would favor me with a prosperous voyage; that he would give me an unclouded sky, and smooth waters by day, and that I might lie down by night on a beaver blanket, enjoying uninterrupted sleep and pleasant dreams; and also that I might find continual protection under the great pipe of peace. In this manner he continued his petitions till I could no longer hear them."[1]

Thus Carver passed on and on into the wilderness lying westward of Lake Michigan; up the Fox River to "the great town of the Winnebagoes"; thence to the Wisconsin River; and finally to the Mississippi. Having reached this mighty stream, he parted from the traders who had thus far been his companions; and with only two servants,—one a French Canadian, the other a Mohawk of Canada,—he began his voyage up the Mississippi in a single canoe. In due time, he reached the Falls of St. Anthony, whence after some delay he continued his ascent of the great river until he arrived at the mouth of the River St. Pierre. Up this river, likewise, he forced his way, having the pipe of peace fixed at the bow of his canoe and the English colors flying at the stern, until, after about two hundred miles, he came to the country of "the Naudowessies of the Plains."

[1] "Travels," etc., 23–25.

Receiving from these people the most friendly hospitality, he dwelt among them during that winter—seven months long.

And now a great disappointment was to befall him. Though he had already proceeded so far into the wilderness, there still remained more than two thousand miles of wilderness yet to be traversed before he could reach the goal for which he had started—the Straits of Annian, on the Pacific. For such a journey through strange lands and fierce peoples, no success could be expected without an ample supply of those goods for presents which, by the promise of the governor of Michillimackinac, were to await him at the Falls of St. Anthony. Thither, accordingly, he sent for them, but only to find, with great bitterness of heart, that the governor's promise had not been fulfilled; that the necessary goods could not then be procured from others; and that the completion of his vast project must, for that time at least, be abandoned.[1]

Spending the summer and autumn of 1767 in energetic and very important explorations among the lands and waters and peoples between the Mississippi and Lake Superior, he finally coasted along the northern shore of that immense lake, and early in November, 1767, he arrived once more at Michillimackinac. During the fourteen months which had passed since his departure from this fort, he had traveled on foot and by canoe nearly four thousand miles, and had formed acquaintance with twelve nations of Indians, besides making geographical discoveries of no little importance. At Michillimackinac he was obliged to remain until the opening of navigation in June, 1768, when he began his journey homeward. In the October following, he reached Boston, "having," as he says, "been absent from it on this expedition two years and five months, and during that time traveled near seven thousand miles. From thence, as soon as I had properly digested my journal and charts, I set out for England, to communicate the discov-

[1] "Travels," etc., 92–93, 131.

eries I had made, and to render them beneficial to the kingdom." [1]

III.

Arriving in England in 1769, he petitioned the government for some recognition of his labors and of his losses in the public service,—in the hope, also, of being thus enabled to resume and to complete his great tour of discovery across the continent. To the lords of trade and plantations, he submitted his journals and his charts; by these great officers he was examined in person respecting his travels; he received from them a gracious permission to publish his discoveries—and that was all that he received from them,—even that, also, being soon withdrawn.

Of course, for the business to which he desired to draw their attention, the time was most inopportune. The dispute with the colonies, which had been allayed by the repeal of the Stamp Act, and had been revived by the legislation of the following year, was now fast ripening into its later fierceness and violence. No doubt the project then pressed by Carver upon the attention of the government was an important one. Unfortunately, however, it was not the project then first in order. Before the British government could properly incur the cost of ascertaining the extent of its American possessions, it needed to incur the cost of ascertaining whether it was destined to have any American possessions at all. When, at last, the dispute with the colonies passed from words to blows, Carver became still more embarrassed. Soldier as he was, he shrank from taking service on either side; he would not draw his sword against his king, nor had he the heart to draw it against his own countrymen. Unable, therefore, to return to America—where his neutrality would have been an offense; with no funds at his command in England; with no claims upon the government which the government could then recognize, he

[1] "Travels," etc., 177.

was forced for his livelihood to become a hack-writer, and to bow himself down to such ill-paid tasks as the booksellers of London might choose to employ him in. In 1778, nine years after his arrival there, he succeeded in bringing out his noble and fascinating book of "Travels through the Interior Parts of North America." On account of the reputation which this book brought to him, he was enabled in the following year to gain something by the sale of his name for a compilation entitled "The New Universal Traveler."[1] In the same year, also, in the hope of stimulating an industry then made important by the cutting off of the usual supply of tobacco from America, he published in Dublin "A Treatise on the Culture of the Tobacco Plant, with the Manner in which it is usually cured: adapted to Northern Climates, and designed for the Use of the Landholders of Great Britain and Ireland."[2]

IV.

All these, however, were employments which, if they brought him some immediate distinction, brought him little else. Baffled at every turn, submitting himself at last to the abject labors of a clerk in a lottery office, working and worrying beyond his strength in the effort to save his English[3] wife and children from starvation, even his robust

[1] It is a further token of the reputation which his "Travels" brought to him, that in "A New and Complete Collection of Voyages and Travels," compiled by John Hamilton Moore, and published in London (n.d., but probably) about 1780, Carver is chosen as the last of the famous travelers to represent American exploration. What is given of his book extends in double columns from page 874 to page 895 of the second volume of this "Collection."

[2] Of this very rare book, the only copy I have ever met with is in the library of Mr. John Nicholas Brown, of Providence, R. I.

[3] Nothing is here said of any efforts made by him for the support of his American wife and children. Jonathan Carver was in many ways so gallant a fellow that one is quite sorry to be compelled to mention, even in the privacy of a footnote, the one serious stain which rests upon his character. Was it, perhaps, due to his prolonged residence among the Indians, that, after he had gone to the other side of the Atlantic, it became somewhat easy for him to yield himself to the polygamic custom? At any rate, it must not be concealed that, "at

constitution finally gave way; and in the year 1780, "after rendering, at the expense of fortune and health and the risk of life, many important services to his country," Jonathan Carver "perished through want in the first city of the world."[1] With this man's sorrowful history, is bound up another touching fact—a fact most worthy of remembrance, as a token of the solidarity and of the interchanging benignity of literature in England and America. It was in consequence of the publication, soon after his death, of the tale of Carver's career as an explorer in America, and especially of the struggles and the miseries he encountered as an American man of letters in London, that, for the relief in future of deserving men of letters there, the foundation was laid for that munificent endowment, now so celebrated under the name of "The Royal Literary Fund."[2]

Every one who has come to some acquaintance with Jonathan Carver, will be glad to think that his name is not likely to be forgotten among those vast, intelligent, and powerful communities now filling that portion of the Northwest which he explored so lovingly, and at a cost to himself so great.[3] It is, however, to something more than to a local remembrance in this country that he seems destined. His best monument is his book. As a contribution to the history of inland discovery upon this continent, and especially to our materials for true and precise information

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the time of his marriage in England, he had a wife and five children living in America." J. Westby-Gibson, in "Dictionary of National Biography," ix., 238.

[1] These words are from the "Account of the Author," prefixed to the third edition of Carver's "Travels" published in London in 1781. See pages 18–19.

[2] F. S. Drake, "Dic. of Am. Biog.," 167.

[3] In 1867,—just one hundred and one years from the date of his arrival in that region,—a commemoration of him was held not far from St. Paul, at the cave which bears his name; and a report of the ceremony has been published under the title of "The Carver Centenary." His name has been again brought to public attention by Mr. Paul Leicester Ford, who in 1890 reprinted from "The Royal Magazine," for September, 1759, "A Short History and Description of Fort Niagara, with an Account of its importance to Great Britain. Written by an English Prisoner, 1758," and signed "J. C——r."

concerning the "manners, customs, religion, and language of the Indians," Carver's book of "Travels" is of unsurpassed value. Besides its worth for instruction, is its worth for delight; we have no other "Indian book" more captivating than this. Here is the charm of a sincere, powerful, and gentle personality—the charm of novel and significant facts, of noble ideas, of humane sentiments, all uttered in English well-ordered and pure. In evidence, also, of the European celebrity acquired by his book, may be cited the fact that it seems to have had a strong fascination for Schiller, as, indeed, might have been expected; and Carver's report[1] of a harangue by a Naudowessian chief over the dead body of one of their great warriors—being itself a piece of true poetry in prose—was turned into verse by the German poet, and became famous as his "Nadowessiers Totenlied,"[2]—a dirge which pleased Goethe so much that he declared it to be among the best of Schiller's poems in that vein, and wished that his friend had written a dozen such.[3]

V.

Robert Rogers, who was born in New Hampshire in 1727 and who died in London near the close of the century, was a noted American officer in the service of the crown during the two great wars which occurred in America in his time. He is also to be remembered for his intelligent contributions to the history of the first of these wars, and for his descriptions, as an eye-witness, of the lands and peoples immedi-

[1] "Travels," 399–400.

[2] "Schillers sämtliche Werke in fünfzehn Bänden. Mit Einleitungen von Karl Goedeke." i. 162–163.

[3] Schiller's versification of the Indian harangue as given by Carver, was translated into English by Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, and was published, first, as "The Indian's Death-Song," in "Blackwood's Magazine" for December, 1842, p. 765; again, as "The Indian Death-Dirge," in "The Poems and Ballads of Schiller," Tauchnitz ed., Leipzig, 1844, pp. 26–27; and still again, and much improved, as "The Nadowessian Death-Dirge," in the London edition of the volume last named. Of this London edition an American reprint appeared in New York in 1866, wherein this song is given on pages 55–56.

ately concerned therein. Being present at the siege of Detroit in the war with Pontiac, in 1763, he kept "A Journal" of it, beginning with the sixth of May, and breaking off suddenly on the eighth of August.[1] Two years afterward, he published in London "Journals of Major Robert Rogers: containing an Account of the several Excursions he made under the Generals who commanded upon the Continent of North America, during the late War."[2] In the same year, and in the same city, he also published "A Concise Account of North America," devoted to descriptions of the several British colonies there, and of especial value for its sketches of the Indians and of the outlying countries then occupied by them. Both of these books have the worth which attaches to direct testimony from a competent witness. In both of them, also, the author writes with a manly and soldierlike straightforwardness, saying simply the thing he has to say, and being therewith content.[3]

VI.

In proof of the almost insatiable interest of the public in direct facts touching the American Indians and the way to deal with them, may be mentioned the temporary celebrity, both in America and in Europe, acquired by "An Historical Account of the Expedition against the Ohio Indians, in the Year 1764, under the Command of Henry Bouquet, Esquire, Colonel of Foot and now Brigadier General in

[1] This "Journal" seems to have been sent off by him, during the siege, to Sir William Johnson, among whose manuscripts in the New York State Library it was found about forty years ago. It was edited by Franklin B. Hough, and published in 1860, forming pages 121–135 in the fourth number of "Munsell's Historical Series."

[2] The pretended reprint of this work at Concord, New Hampshire, in 1831, under the title of "Reminiscences of the French War," etc., is a slovenly and fraudulent piece of work: it tampers with the text in an abominable way.

[3] The literary versatility of this bold soldier is further seen in a tragedy written by him, and founded on his knowledge of the great Indian chieftain, Pontiac. For this, the reader of the present work is referred to the chapter dealing with our early dramatic writings.

America," published first in Philadelphia in 1765, next in London in 1766, and next in Amsterdam in 1769, the last being a French translation by C. G. F. Dumas. The conspicuous matter in the book is the military journal, which was written by the gallant Bouquet during his campaign beyond the Alleghanies, and which was retouched, diluted, and somewhat conventionalized by an editor who is here content to describe himself as "a Lover of his Country"—under which designation long lay concealed the versatile William Smith, Provost of the College in Philadelphia.[1] The real value and the fascination of the book were also much enhanced by the insertion of a series of "military papers" treating of the traits and resources of the Indians in their favorite capacity as fighters; likewise, of the prudent method of forming English settlements along that frontier—so horrid with its menace of the terror by night and of the arrow that flieth by day.[2]

VII.

"A Description of East Florida,"[3] by William Stork, first published in London in 1766, is a skillful and a delightful account of a country then but little known to the rest of the world, and especially to England to which it belonged. In a style pure, flexible, and graceful, with a charming forbearance from over-emphasis and with frequent touches of humor, the author contrives to pack his thirty or forty pages full of the most readable information about Florida, under the several divisions of "climate and situation," "soil," "natural productions," and "cultivation." As might be expected of so deft an advocate, his optimism is

[1] Horace Wemyss Smith, "Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith," i. 392. Until recently it has been supposed that the compiler of the book was Thomas Hutchins; and to him it is ascribed by Rich, William Allen, Allibone, and others.

[2] "Historical Account of Bouquet's Expedition," etc., 93–156, reprinted in "Ohio Valley Historical Series," Cincinnati, 1868.

[3] Third ed., London, 1769.

equal to almost any draught that may be made upon it by the circumstances of his lovely client,—as, for instance, in connection with so troublesome a topic as that of the insects and reptiles of Florida: "If one considers the extent of East Florida, and the small number of inhabitants it has had these sixty years since the native Indians were exterminated by the Creeks, one would be apt to think it must of course be overrun with venomous insects and reptiles. Several writers who mention Florida have taken it for granted to be so: amongst others, the gentleman who lately wrote Major Rogers's 'History of North America,' tells us East Florida would be a fine country, were it not for the innumerable venomous insects with which it is infested. The fact is quite otherwise. If we except the alligator, East Florida has fewer insects than any other province in America. During my stay there, I saw but two black snakes. Mr. Rolle, who for eighteen months lived constantly in the woods, has seen but one rattlesnake. If East Florida is so happy as to have but few venomous creatures, it is not owing to a supernatural or miraculous cause, like the blessings of St. Patrick upon Ireland, but to a very plain and natural one, which is, that the hunting parties of the Creek Indians, who are dispersed through the whole province, continually set the grass on fire, for the conveniency of hunting; by which means, not only the insects but the eggs are destroyed.

"Alligators are here very numerous. They do not excite any fear, as there has not yet occurred any instance of their attacking men, either in the water or upon the land.

"There is an insect in East Florida, not known in other parts of America; which is a large yellow spider. The hind part of his body is bigger than a pigeon's egg, and the rest in proportion; its web is a true yellow silk, so strong as to catch small birds, upon which it feeds. The bite of this spider is attended with a swelling of the part and great pain, but no danger of life.

"A great variety of lizards are found here, some of them

very beautiful—changing their color like the cameleon: they are quite harmless." [1]

VIII.

In 1775, just as the physical conflict of the Revolution was beginning to redden our fields, there was published in London a somewhat stately quarto volume of nearly five hundred pages, entitled "The History of the American Indians,"—the author, James Adair, being described on the title-page as "a trader with the Indians, and resident in their country for forty years." This book, then, is a true product of the American wilderness. "Most of the pages," says he, "were written among our old friendly Chickasaw, with whom I first traded in the year 1744. . . . Never was a literary work begun and carried on with more disadvantages. The author was separated by his situation from the conversation of the learned, and from any libraries; frequently interrupted, also, by business, and obliged to conceal his papers, through the natural jealousy of the natives. The trader's letters of correspondence aways excited their suspicions, and often gave offense. Another difficulty I had to encounter, was the secrecy and closeness of the Indians as to their own affairs, and their prying disposition into those of others,—so that there is no possibility of retirement among them. . . . One great advantage my readers will here have: I sat down to draw the Indians on the spot—had them many years standing before me—and lived with them as a friend and brother. . . . The public may depend on the fidelity of the author, and that his descriptions are genuine, though perhaps not so polished and romantic as other Indian histories and accounts they may have seen." [2]

The style of the book throughout comports with these tokens,—the style of an honest man and a manly Englishman,—plain, frank, sinewy. Nor is the book lacking in pas-

[1] "A Description," etc., 21–22. [2] Preface.

sages of vivid force and picturesqueness, having that sincerity and fulness of statement which comes of a direct handling of the facts in the case, all apparently quickened and guided by motives humane and patriotic. As mere testimony it has this weakness: its author had adopted the theory of the Jewish origin of the American Indians, and was led thereby to marshall a part of his statements in the form of twenty-three "arguments" in support of that hypothesis. Nearly one half of the book is thus taken up with what one of his contemporaries described as "ingenious extravagance."[1] After he makes his escape, however, from this perilous bog of preconceived theory, he proceeds to tell the remainder of his story for its own sake, and not for the sake of a bit of speculation which he is anxious to bolster up. By far the most important part of the book, therefore, is the latter part. Through all those solid pages —about two hundred and fifty of them—he gives his testimony like an honest and clear-headed witness, unfolding the things that he himself knows, and knows entirely: namely, the results of forty years of observation and experience among those powerful and fierce tribes of Indians who then dwelt in the lands south of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi. As a piece of sustained narration and description pertaining to that subject, the book has an unrivaled value and charm. No lapse of time can diminish the interest attaching to the modest and graphic tales he here tells of his own thrilling adventures[2]; or to his clear-cut delineations of those ferocious but still fascinating bipeds with whom he had to deal—strange survivals of the stone age of human culture[3]; or, even, to the brusque and fearless words with which, in the very capital of the empire and within ear-shot of the king's palace, he speaks out his sympathy with his fellow-colonists in that crisis of their

[1] B. S. Barton, "New Views," etc., Prelim. Descrip., iii.

[2] For example, see pages 276–278; also, pages 298–302.

[3] See pages 388–399.

danger, and his disdain for the petty English statesmanship which was then presuming to govern an empire with an amount of wit which would hardly have sufficed for the government of a village.[1]

[1] See pages 266–267 ; also, pages 462–464.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEGINNINGS OF NEW LIFE IN VERSE AND PROSE: PHILADELPHIA, PRINCETON, AND NEW YORK. 1763–1775.

I.—Nathaniel Evans's "Poems on Several Occasions"—His death in 1767—"To Melancholy"—"An Ode, Attempted in the Manner of Horace."

II.—Elizabeth Fergusson—Her "Postscript," 1764—Her verses addressed to Nathaniel Evans.

III.—Francis Hopkinson as described by John Adams in 1776—His versatility.

IV.—Hopkinson's early life—His political attitude in 1766—His visit to England just after the repeal of the Stamp Act—His occupations in America till after the Declaration of Independence—His character as a statesman not hurt by his levity as a writer.

V.—Hopkinson's early work as a lyric poet—"My Generous Heart Disdains"—"O'er the Hills Far Away"—"My Love is Gone to Sea."

VI.—The death of Philip Freneau in extreme old age—Interest attaching to his long career—His unique position as a satirist of the enemies of the Revolution.

VII.—Freneau's lineage and early training—His graduation at Princeton in 1771—His earliest work as a verse-writer—Occupations during the Revolution—His fondness for the sea—His sea-poetry—His playful poem on the ship's crew with clerical names.

VIII.—Other examples of his playful manner in verse—His prevailing note, both serious and severe—His choice of satire as his chief poetic vocation—His gifts for other and higher forms of verse—Oblique tributes to him by Campbell, Walter Scott, and other British writers.

IX.—Freneau's escape from the poetic mannerisms of English verse in his time—His "Power of Fancy"—His "Retirement."

I.

In the year 1772, amid all the heat and uproar of politics then raging up and down these sea-board communities in America, there was published in Philadelphia a volume so unique as to contain absolutely no reference to politics,—to wit, "Poems on Several Occasions, with Some Other

Compositions," by Nathaniel Evans. The writer, a native of Philadelphia, a master of arts in its college, and a clergyman of the Anglican Church, had died five years before, at the age of twenty-five, leaving behind him, throughout a wide circle of acquaintance, the impression of something very rare in literary capacity, as well as very sweet and noble in personal character. Nearly all of the writings here huddled together into print—after he was gone and could neither explain nor protest—were but the playthings of a sensitive but still undeveloped mind, the finger-practice of a youth of poetic instincts, who was training himself for maturer work but still under pernicious leadership, and in opposition to a host of disadvantages in his outward life. That he had in him the likelihood of an ultimate escape from the wooden tyranny of his poetic models, may partly appear from these lines, "To Melancholy":

"Come, thou queen of pensive air,—
In thy sable, sooted car,
By two mournful turtles drawn,—
Let me meet thee on yon lawn,
With decent vestments wrapt around,
And thy brows with cypress bound!
Quickly come, thou sober dame,
And thy musing poet claim.
Bear me where thou lov'st to rove
In the deep, dark, solemn grove,
Where, on banks of velvet green,
Peace, with Silence, still is seen;
And Leisure, at the sultry noon,
On flowery carpet flings him down.
There, sweet queen, I 'll sing thy pleasures
In enthusiastic measures,
And sound thy praise through the lone vale,
Responsive to the hollow gale;
The murmuring rills shall spread it round,
And grottoes the wild notes rebound."[1]

[1] "Poems on Several Occasions," 135.

A still more valid token of poetic promise in Nathaniel Evans is furnished us by some lines of his, struck off with playful strokes,—"An Ode, Attempted in the Manner of Horace," and addressed to his boon companion in poetry and in poverty, Thomas Godfrey.[1] At the time when these verses were written, Godfrey was earning his daily bread in some commercial employment in North Carolina, while Evans was doing the same thing in the same way in Philadelphia,—both lads being full of literary aspiration, both hampered by the hard limitations of their lives, and both conscious of some deadly chill in the surrounding atmosphere, charged as it was with the maxims and ambitions of commerce:

"While you, dear Tom, are forced to roam,
In search of fortune, far from home,
O'er bogs, o'er seas, and mountains,
I, too, debarred the soft retreat
Of shady groves, and murmur sweet
Of silver-prattling fountains,

"Must mingle with the bustling throng,
And bear my load of cares along,
Like any other sinner:
For, where 's the ecstasy in this—
To loiter in poetic bliss,
And go without a dinner?

"Flaccus, we know, immortal bard,
With mighty kings and statesmen fared,
And lived in cheerful plenty;
But now, in these[2] degenerate days,
The slight reward of empty praise
Scarce one receives in twenty.

[1] I have given an account of Godfrey, in my "History of Am. Lit. during the Colonial Time," ii. 244–251.

[2] The text reads, "those"—evidently a misprint.

"Well might the Roman swan along
The pleasing Tiber pour his song,
When blest with ease and quiet;
Oft did he grace Mæcenas' board,
Who would for him throw by the lord,
And in Falernian riot.

"But, dearest Tom! those[1] days are past,
And we are in a climate cast
Where few the Muse can relish;
Where all the doctrine now that 's told,
Is that a shining heap of gold
Alone can man embellish.

"Then since 't is thus, my honest friend,
If you be wise, my strain attend,
And counsel sage adhere to:
With me, henceforward, join the crowd,
And like the rest, proclaim aloud,
That money is all virtue!

"Then may we both, in time, retreat,
To some fair villa, sweetly neat,
To entertain the Muses;
And then life's noise and trouble leave—
Supremely blest, we 'll never grieve
At what the world refuses."[2]

II.

It is rather for her possible, than for her actual, poetic achievement, that Elizabeth Fergusson, a woman of brilliant social gifts, survives among the literary traditions of the Revolution. Belonging to a family of considerable note in the middle colonies, much of her life was passed at Graeme Park, a somewhat stately country-seat eighteen

[1] The text reads "these,"—evidently a misprint.

[2] "Poems on Several Occasions," 50–52.

miles northwest of Philadelphia.[1] But little of her work as a writer was ever permitted to go into print; and what she did make public seems commonly to have been hidden under some form of literary disguise. It is probable that her hand may be traced in the rather striking, even if sombre, verses which, with true feminine appropriateness, were added as "A Postscript" to an anonymous poem entitled "Resignation,"[2] published at Philadelphia in 1764:

"Why mourn the dead? You wrong the grave—
From storm that safe retreat;
We are still tossing out at sea—
Our Admiral in port!

"Was death denied, this world—a scene
How dismal and forlorn!
To Death we owe that 't is to man
A blessing to be born.

. . . . . .

"How happy that no storm or time
Of Death can rob the just,—
None pluck from their unaching heads
Soft pillows in the dust!"[3]

Examples of her sprightlier and more carnal moods are to be seen in a series of little poems[4] produced by her, under the name of "Laura," in the course of a literary duel of badinage and flirtation with the poet, Nathaniel Evans. To this charming young bachelor, then settled as an Anglican clergyman in Gloucester County, New Jersey, she

[1] An account of her is given in "Memoirs of the Hist. Soc. of Pa.," i. 459–463.

[2] I found this volume in the library of the Pa. Hist. Society; and in attributing these lines to Elizabeth Fergusson, I follow the lead of local information inscribed upon the title-page.

[3] "Resignation," etc., 71.

[4] These are in Evans, "Poems on Several Occasions," etc., 149–150, 152–154, 159–160.

addressed what she called "A Parody," playfully descanting on the supposed felicities of his unwedded life in that parochial solitude:

"How happy is the country parson's lot!—
Forgetting bishops, as by them forgot;
Tranquil of spirit, with an easy mind,
To all his vestry's votes he sits resigned.
Of manners gentle, and of temper even,
He jogs his flocks with easy pace to heaven.
In Greek and Latin pious books he keeps;
And while his clerk sings psalms, he soundly sleeps.
His garden fronts the sun's sweet orient beams,
And fat churchwardens prompt his golden dreams.
The earliest fruit in his fair orchard blooms;
And cleanly pipes pour out tobacco's fumes.
From rustic bridegroom oft he takes the ring;
And hears the milkmaid plaintive ballads sing.
Backgammon cheats whole winter nights away,
And Pilgrim's Progress helps a rainy day."[1]

III.

On the morning of a certain day in August, 1776, John Adams, member of the Continental Congress then in session at Philadelphia, unbent his mind from the cares of state by taking a walk into Arch Street, and visiting there the studio of the portrait-painter, Charles Wilson Peale; and in a letter to his wife on the following day, the sturdy Puritan politician gave a näive sketch of the persons and things he had seen there,—a sketch first of the painter himself, then of his paintings, and finally of a fellow-congressman who

[1] "Poems on Several Occasions," etc., by N. Evans, 149–150. These lines will be recognized as a parody on that part of Pope's "Eloiza to Abelard," which begins:

"How happy is the blameless vestal's lot!
The world forgetting, by the world forgot";

and extending from line 207 to line 222. "Works of Alexander Pope," Warburton's edition, London, 1753, ii. 24–39.

happened to be at the studio as a visitor like himself. "At this shop," he says, "I met Mr. Francis Hopkinson, late a mandamus councillor of New Jersey, now a member of the Continental Congress, who, it seems, is a native of Philadelphia, . . . was liberally educated, and is a painter and a poet. I have a curiosity to penetrate a little deeper into the bosom of this curious gentleman, and may possibly give you some more particulars concerning him. He is one of your pretty, little, curious, ingenious men. His head is not bigger than a large apple, less than our friend Pemberton, or Doctor Simon Tufts. I have not met with anything in natural history more amusing and entertaining than his personal appearance,—yet he is genteel and well bred, and is very social." The unconscious humor of this final concession lingers on into the words of the next sentence, revealing, as the entire letter does, the mind of a practical, aspiring, New England lawyer and politician of that period, just waking up to the perception of a form of culture with which up to that time he had had no contact; of which, indeed, he could not help speaking with a sort of condescension; and yet to the acquisition of which even he could almost be willing betimes to let himself down. "I wish," he adds, "I had leisure and tranquillity of mind to amuse myself with those elegant and ingenious arts of painting, sculpture, statuary, architecture, and music. But I have not." [1]

But, now, this queer little congressman whom John Adams thus met in Peale's studio, and who seemed to the New Englander to be as amusing a specimen of natural history as he had ever met with,—who and what was he? The range of this little man's versatility was by no means fully indicated in the remark that he had been a mandamus councillor, and was at that time a member of congress, a painter, and a poet. Even in these days, Francis Hopkinson would have been regarded as a man of quite unusual cultivation, having in reality many solid as well as shining

[1] "Letters of John Adams, Addressed to His Wife," i. 156–157.

accomplishments. He was a distinguished practitioner of the law; he became an eminent judge; he was a statesman trained by much study and experience; he was a mathematician, a chemist, a physicist, a mechanician, an inventor, a musician and a composer of music, a man of literary knowledge and practice, a writer of airy and dainty songs, a clever artist with pencil and brush, and a humorist of unmistakable power. For us Americans, the name of Francis Hopkinson lives—if indeed it does live—chiefly on account of its presence in the august roll-call of the signers of the Declaration of Independence; and through all the strenuous years which preceded and followed that great avowal, this man served the cause therein set forth, not only as a patriot of austere principle, as a statesman of genuine sagacity, as a citizen of high civic courage, but as a wit and a satirist,—the edge of his sarcasm cutting into the enemy as keenly as any sword, and the ruddy glow of his mirth kindling good cheer over all the land on many a grim day when good cheer was a hard thing to be had on his side of the fight.[1]

IV.

He was born in Philadelphia on the second of October, 1737. His father, Thomas Hopkinson, a barrister of English birth and education, had settled in Philadelphia in early life, arriving there, probably, in 1731; and thenceforward, until his premature death in 1751, he had risen steadily in the public esteem, not only as a lawyer and a judge, but as a man of literary and scientific training, and as a friend of

[1] Of Francis Hopkinson no adequate biography has yet been written. An early sketch of him in "Delaplaine's Repository," vol. ii. part i. pp. 125–138, seems to be founded on an earlier sketch by some writer not named by Delaplaine, but contemporary with Hopkinson. Other sketches of him are in Sanderson, "Biography of the Signers," ii. 187–204; in "The National Portrait Gallery" for 1836, 5th article; and in "The Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.," ii. 314–324. The last is by Charles R. Hildeburn; and though it contains one quite serious lapse from accuracy, it is upon the whole the best account of Hopkinson now to be had.

every good cause.[1] The son, thus left an orphan at the age of fourteen, received the best education then to be had in that neighborhood. He happened to be the first pupil to enter the new College of Philadelphia, and was in the class of its first graduates,—receiving his bachelor's degree in 1757, and his master's degree in 1760. He studied law in the office of Benjamin Chew, the attorney-general of Pennsylvania; he was admitted to the bar in 1761; he devoted himself zealously and with success to the work of his profession; and to the very end of his life, he showed, as his father had done before him, a fine versatility of talent, and an active interest in all things tending to the public good.[2]

On the 26th of May, 1766, almost at the very moment of the news that the Stamp Act had been repealed, Hopkinson set sail for England,—where he was to pay a long visit among his kinsfolk on that side of the sea. It is a touching fact that almost the last glimpse which the young American barrister then had of his own country, as his ship moved down the Delaware, was of the popular illuminations at Newcastle over the news which was then making all Americans so glad.[3] As his ship sailed away from those happy

[1] Thomas Hopkinson became judge of the Vice-Admiralty for Pennsylvania, member of the Council of Pennsylvania, and first president of the American Philosophical Society. He is named by Provost William Smith as the first of four men most active in the founding of the College of Philadelphia, now the University of Pennsylvania. He was also a member of Franklin's Junto, and one of Franklin's very intimate friends; and it was to him that Franklin acknowledged himself as indebted for the discovery of the power of metallic points "to throw off the electrical fire." "Works of Franklin," Sparks' ed., v. 182.

[2] It helps one to ascertain the quality and range of this man's gifts to note, that besides devoting himself to his profession as a lawyer, and to experimental researches in chemistry and physics, and to much study of literature, and at one time even to the business of a conveyancer and of a shop-keeper, he was able, on behalf of the public, to serve as secretary of the Library Company of Philadelphia for several years, as its librarian for more than one year, and as its director for more than two years; also, for various periods, as secretary to the vestry of the united parishes of Christ Church and St. Peter's, and as warden of St. Peter's. For awhile, also, he tried to improve the services of the two parishes by teaching their children to sing.

[3] Hopkinson to his mother, 2 July, 1766, in "The Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.," ii. 316–317.

signals, and carried him out into the double mystery of the ocean and of the future, no doubt those lights blazing upon the shore seemed to him to be a token of the end of all the dangerous disputes that could arise for many a year between the colonies and the mother country. So little, in fact, did he dream of the fiercer and the less extinguishable flames that were soon to be kindled all along the continent, that when, during the period of this very visit in England, parliament passed its acts for laying new customs duties on the colonies and even for setting up in America a board of commissioners for collecting such duties, Hopkinson himself became an eager applicant for a place on that board, and suffered deep disappointment in consequence of his failure to get it.[1]

In England, he spent about fourteen months,—having access to the best society there. A near kinsman of his was the Bishop of Worcester; and Hopkinson made long visits at that prelate's palace at Hartlebury. In London, his acquaintance was among interesting and distinguished people. One day he speaks of having a whitebait dinner at Greenwich with Benjamin West and his family; and, on another day, of dining with John Penn, the proprietor of Pennsylvania, and with Lord North.[2] Finally, having seen something of the world beyond his own horizon, and having gained, doubtless, something of the catholicity of mind and the polish of manners which a year or two of the best English life could give to an observant and tractable young fellow like him, Hopkinson returned home in the latter part of 1767. One year afterward, he was married to Ann Borden, of Bordentown, New Jersey, granddaughter of the man who founded the town; and through his alliance with that wealthy and influential family, he was gradually drawn to be a citizen of New Jersey. The young politician who had dined with Lord North in 1767, had evidently made a good impression on that powerful statesman; for, in 1772,

[1] Letter of Hopkinson's, "The Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.," ii. 318.
[2] Ibid. 317.

through Lord North's favor, Hopkinson was given the office of collector of customs at Newwcastle, with the privilege of discharging its duties by deputy; and, in 1774, he became by royal appointment a member of the council of New Jersey.

Meantime, the square issue was forming between the colonies on the one side, and the British government on the other. How would Francis Hopkinson stand, with respect to that issue? This flattering kindness of Lord North, this profitable sinecure office at Newcastle, this seat in the aristocratic branch of the legislature of New Jersey,—all these were dangerous lures to an ambitious American politician of that period. The firmness of many a member of the opposition went down, in those times, under such temptations. Concerning Francis Hopkinson, however, there seems not to have been any serious doubt. In June, 1776, when the question of national Independence had suddenly become the master-question of the hour, he was sent by New Jersey as one of her delegates in Congress. On the 28th of June, he presented his credentials, and took his seat; on the second of July, he voted for the resolution favoring Independence; two days later, he voted for the Declaration itself; on the second of August, when the engrossed copy of the Declaration came into the house for signatures, he put his signature there where it belonged; and from the midst of all those perilous proceedings, he wrote to a friend in Baltimore these modest and manly words: "If my poor abilities can be of the least service to my country in her day of trial, I shall not complain of the hardship of the task."[1]

Thus, as it appears, this same "pretty, little, curious, ingenious man"—this member of congress who was to John Adams an amusing specimen of natural history—this lawyer and statesman who could also write songs and set them to music of his own, who could play daintily on the harpsichord, and could draw in crayon exquisite portraits of

[1] Hopkinson to Dr. Coale, of Baltimore, in "The Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.," ii. 319.

the beauties of Bordentown and of Philadelphia, and who had a head "not bigger than a large apple"—had a heart also quite as big perhaps as John Adams's, and a soul kindred to his, likewise, in central gravity, and in valor, and in the power of self-sacrifice. Beneath the elegant exterior of that traveled and polished little gentleman, not spoiled by any dilettanteism of his, nor made frivolous by his irrepressible gift of mirth, nor seduced by the smiles of the great man in England who stood nearest to the king, was a nature as clear-eyed, as pure-handed, as firm-footed, and as solidly good, we may suppose, as belonged to the most ponderous and unadorned patriot-father in all the august Congress at Philadelphia.

V.

But before we drift quite away into those angry times in which Francis Hopkinson acted his rare and effective part, let us stay a moment for one glimpse at a far different aspect of his mind and life. As one thinks of that extremely serious collection of personages—the signers of the Declaration of Independence—whose faces, looking down upon us from their squares of canvas in Independence Hall, seem to have solidified themselves into a preternatural and somewhat ligneous gravity, as if to confront the perpetual stare of an admiring posterity; as one remembers the wise, operose, valiant, sedate, and altogether considerable things those solemn gentlemen did in their times,—it is not quite easy to conceive of any one of them as ever having had in this grim life such a thing as a lyric mood, a solitary hour unconcerned enough to have permitted him to write, and to set to music, and even to sing, say, a dainty, defiant, little love-song like this—a song not unworthy of the touch of Herrick or of Lovelace:

1.

"My generous heart disdains
The slave of love to be;
I scorn his servile chains,
And boast my liberty.

This whining
And pining
And wasting with care,
Are not to my taste, be she ever so fair.

2.

"Shall a girl's capricious frown
Sink my noble spirits down?
Shall a face of white and red
Make me droop my silly head?
Shall I set me down and sigh
For an eye-brow, or an eye?
For a braided lock of hair,
Curse my fortune and despair?
My generous heart disdains, etc.

3.

"Still uncertain is to-morrow,
Not quite certain is to-day—
Shall I waste my time in sorrow?
Shall I languish life away?
All because a cruel maid
Hath not love with love repaid?
My generous heart disdains, etc."[1]

And who would have imagined that, among all those plodding and pragmatical members of the Continental Congress, engaged in their portentous task of hunting out of the land sundry herds of Hessians and their British employers, was one who could, at any time, have written a merry little sporting-song like this,—a song for the fox-hunters,—a song having lightness of touch, swiftness, airy melody, and genuine lyric feeling?

[1] "Poems on Several Subjects," 190–191; separate paging in vol. iii. of Hopkinson's "Miscellaneous Essays and Occasional Writings." These volumes, printed as they were after Hopkinson's death, contain an unusual number of typographical errors.

"O'er the hills far away, at the birth of the morn,
I hear the full tone of the sweet-sounding horn;
The sportsmen with shoutings all hail the new day,
And swift run the hounds o'er the hills far away.
Across the deep valley their course they pursue,
And rush thro' the thickets yet silver'd with dew:
Nor hedges nor ditches their speed can delay—
Still sounds the sweet horn o'er the hills far away."[1]

And, surely, no reader seeking for other verses of Hopkinson's which may still be worth recalling, is likely to overlook this little thing,—the song of the young wife of Jemmy the Sailor, after Jemmy the Sailor has gone to sea:

1.

"My love is gone to sea,
Whilst I his absence mourn,
No joy shall smile on me
Until my love return.
He ask'd me for his bride,
And many vows he swore;
I blush'd—and soon complied,
My heart was his before.

2.

"One little month was past,
And who so blest as we?
The summons came at last,
And Jemmy must to sea.
I saw his ship so gay
Swift fly the wave-worn shore;
I wip'd my tears away—
And saw his ship no more.

3.

"When clouds shut in the sky,
And storms around me howl;

[1] "Poems on Several Subjects," 190.

When livid lightnings fly,
  And threat'ning thunders roll ;
All hopes of rest are lost,
  No slumbers visit me ;
My anxious thoughts are tost
  With Jemmy on the sea." [1]

VI.

On the eighteenth of December, 1832, an old man, sprightly and vigorous under the weight of nearly eighty-one years, started, just as the evening was coming on, to walk from the village of Monmouth, in New Jersey, to his home in the open country, a distance of about two miles. At that home, a paternal estate of a thousand acres, this man had passed, at intervals, many years of his long life—filled as it had been with manifold employments on land and sea. He was still a fine specimen of active and manly old age; in person somewhat below the ordinary height, but muscular and compact; his face pensive in expression and with a care-worn look; his dark gray eyes sunken deep in their sockets, but sending out gleams and flashes of fire when aroused in talk; his hair once abundant and beautiful, now thinned and bleached by time; stooping a little as he walked; to those who knew him, accustomed to give delight by a conversation abounding in anecdotes of the great age of the American Revolution. On the evening just referred to, he had started alone on his walk towards his home, but the night passed away without his arrival there; and the next morning his lifeless body was found in a swampy meadow, into which, as it seemed, he must have wandered,—missing his way in the darkness, and in his exhaustion and bewilderment surrendering at last to death.

That dead old man was Philip Freneau, incomparably the bitterest and the most unrelenting, and, in some respects the most powerful, of the satirical poets belonging to the insurgent side of the Revolution. His long life, beginning

[1] "Poems on Several Subjects, 186–187.

on the second of January, 1752, twenty-four years before the Declaration of Independence, had spanned a period which included such events as the British conquest of Canada, the American Revolution, the futile experiment of the confederation, the establishment of the national constitution, the rise and fall and extinction of the Federalist party, the whole tragedy of the French Revolution, the earliest dawn and the final setting of the career of Napoleon, our second war with England, the expansion of our national domain to the breadth of the continent, the development of the American slave-power into an aggressive territorial and political propaganda, the inception of the triumphant anti-slavery movement in America, the second election of Andrew Jackson, and the assertion by South Carolina of the doctrine of nullification. The poor old man, thus found dead on the lonely New Jersey moor, had undoubtedly some sweetness in his heart; but he permitted very little of it to work its way down to the tip of his pen. With that pitiless pen of his he had fought many a fierce fight in his day; but the one fierce fight most worthy of him and most likely to keep his name alive in the memory of his countrymen, was that which he fought on behalf of the American Revolution. For such a fight he was born. He was the poet of hatred, rather than of love. He had a passion for controversy. His strength lay in attack; his characteristic measure was the iambic. Among all his verses, the reader finds scarcely one lyric of patriotic enthusiasm, nor many lines to thrill the hearts of the Revolutionists by any touch of loving devotion to their cause, but everywhere lines hot and rank with sarcasm and invective against the enemy. He did, indeed, give ample proof that he had the genius for other and higher forms of poetry; yet it was as a satirist that he won his chief distinction,—as a satirist, likewise, doing always the cruelest work of that savage vocation with the greatest relish. In this respect, Philip Freneau correlates, upon the Whig side, to Jonathan Odell on the side of the Tories. Like Odell, Freneau was a good

hater; his was the wrathful muse; his chosen warfare was grim, unsparing, deadly. He was the satirical gladiator on behalf of the Revolution, even as Odell was the satirical gladiator in opposition to it.

VII.

He came of heroic stock—that of the Huguenots; and if, from the moment of the first American alienation, he quickly learned to hate the British with a hate uncommon even for an American Revolutionist, he perhaps inherited the aptitude for doing so, along with his French name and his French blood. At Princeton, where he received his education, he had for classmates two or three men of note in after years,—Samuel Spring, Hugh Henry Brackenridge, and James Madison. Already the odor of insurrection was in the air; and these young collegians—as is apt to be the case with young collegians—sniffed it eagerly, though perhaps they did not quite realize what the wild fragrance meant that pleased them so. The part which Freneau took on commencement day, in 1771, was that of an interlocutor in a metrical dialogue, written by himself and by Brackenridge, on "The Rising Glory of America"[1]—one of a thousand tokens that already among these colonists was born a spirit of national self-consciousness which must soon snap the cords of provincial subordination, and even fling off at some time the tremendous and indeed the unwholesome fascination with which Europe predominated over the American spirit.

Already, too, before his departure from Princeton, Fre-

[1] The entire poem was published in Philadelphia in 1772. The portion written by Freneau was afterward printed by itself in the first edition of his collected verses, entitled "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 37–51, Philadelphia, 1786. This edition is extremely rare. After much enquiry, I have met with but one copy,—that belonging to the Massachusetts Historical Society, and formerly the property of George Ticknor. Fortunately, this edition has been reprinted in a form that places it within easy reach, by John Russell Smith, London, 1861. To this reprint I always refer in citing the above title.

neau had caught another infection—a more fatal one, even, than that of incipient rebellion—the infection of verse-making. When but sixteen years old, he wrote a considerable poem, vigorously conceived, and in well-wrought rhymed pentameters, on the rather discouraging topic of "The Prophet Jonah"; and, a year later, a dramatic fragment in blank verse, on "The Pyramids of Egypt." Both are examples of really strong and promising poetic work.

It is not easy to learn just how he was employed during the years immediately following his graduation. Very likely, with an inward preference for a literary life, he found in the commercial and maritime connections of his family an occupation not altogether unfriendly to his favorite studies. As the war came on, though he had a passionate interest in its problems, and took in it a fierce and a great part with his terrible pen, he seems never to have fought in it with musket or sword. It is known that both before and during the war he often went to sea, at times in command of a ship, being thus engaged in commercial transactions in the West Indies.

Indeed, he appears to have been greatly attracted by life upon the ocean; and among his poems, both political and non-political, not a few refer to the sea, and to traits of his own experience upon it, and to those fascinating tropical realms into which his voyages had so often brought him as a pilgrim. It is obvious, too, that in the watch he kept of the unfolding fortunes of the Revolution, he was especially drawn to those incidents which appealed to him as a sailor-poet. Moreover, for the purposes of humorous verse, he was not slow to perceive and to use the comic phases of nautical life—even of nautical coarseness and irreverence; as is to be seen, for example, in some playful lines written by him on finding that the crew of a ship on which he happened to be, was made up of men bearing, absurdly enough, the names of several famous English divines:

"In life's unsettled, odd career
What changes every day appear,

To please or plague the eye !—
A goodly brotherhood of priests
Are here transformed to swearing beasts
That heaven and hell defy.

"Here Bonner, bruised with many a knock,
Has changed his surplice for a frock ;
Old Erskine swabs the deck ;
And Watts, that once such pleasure took
In writing hymns, here turned a cook,
Sinners no longer vex.

"Here Burnet, Tillotson, and Blair,
With Jemmy Hervey, curse and swear ;
Here Cudworth mixes grog ;
Pearson the crew to dinner hails,
A graceless Sherlock trims the sails,
And Bunyan heaves the log." [1]

VIII.

The note of playfulness in these lines is, however, a rare one in Freneau's work, whether for land or sea; but still other examples of it may be seen in "The Village Merchant," [2] in "The Desolate Academy," [3] in "Epitaph intended for the Tomb-stone of Patrick Bay, an Irish Soldier and Inn-holder, killed by an ignorant Physician," [4] and especially in "Crispin O'Connor's Answer," [5] wherein the said Crispin thus explains why he had left Ireland and come to America:

"I could not bow to noble knaves
Who equal rights to men deny ;
Scornful I left a land of slaves,
And hither came—my axe to ply.

[1] "Poems on Several Occasions," Monmouth, 1795, 161.
[2] Ibid. 9–15.
[3] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 72–73.
[4] Ibid. 31–32.
[5] "Poems on Several Occasions," 160–161.

"The axe has well repaid my toil:
No king, no priest, I yet espy—
To tythe my hogs, to tax my soil,
And suck my whiskey-bottle dry.

"In British land what snares are laid!—
There, royal rights all right defeat:
They taxed my sun, they taxed my shade,
They taxed the wretched crumbs I eat;

"They taxed my hat, they taxed my shoes,
Fresh taxes still on taxes grew;
They would have taxed my very nose,
Had I not fled, dear friends, to you!"

Too seldom, however, was the playful note allowed to give its relief to Freneau's work. His prevailing tone is not only serious, but severe. Rarely does he permit a smile to ripple upon his own face, or upon ours; and though he did attempt, with a successs that is unmistakable, some of the nobler forms of poetry, it was to satire that he felt himself called, if not by the limitations of his own genius, at least by the circumstances of his own time. Indeed, upon this subject we are not left to conjecture; for in a little poem of his, called "The Author," he expressly tells us that, in his opinion, an American poet was then debarred by the very conditions of American life, from every form of poetry but satire:

"On these bleak climes by Fortune thrown,
Where rigid Reason reigns alone,
Where flowery Fancy holds no sway,
Nor golden forms around her play,
Nor Nature takes her magic hue—
Alas! what has the Muse to do?
An age employed in pointing steel,
Can no poetic raptures feel;
No fabled Love's enchanting power,
Nor tale of Flora's shady bower,

Nor woodland haunt, or murmuring grove,
Can its prosaic bosom move.
The Muse of Love in no request,
I 'll try my fortune with the rest.
Which of the Nine shall I engage,
To suit the humor of the age?
On one, alas! my choice must fall,
The least engaging of them all!
Her visage stern, severe her style,
A clouded brow, a cruel smile,
A mind on murdered victims placed—
She, only she, can please the taste." [1]

Perhaps for immediate recognition, especially under the political and commercial tests of the American literary market, Freneau's conclusion may have been the wise one. At any rate, it is impossible not to regret that the circumstances of his life, and especially the intellectual cravings of the public to which his appeal was confined, did not encourage him to give more of his strength to other muses than to her of the "visage stern." Surely, an American poet from whom Thomas Campbell, "in his best day, thought it worth while to borrow an entire line," and that, too, without taking the trouble to mention the fact, need not have confined himself to the field of satire for lack at least of "fine tact and delicate handling" [2] in the higher work of poetry. In Campbell's mystic and most musical love-tale, —"O'Connor's Child; or, The Flower of Love Lies Bleeding,"—that fastidious poet thus sings of the dead warrior, Connocht Moran, and of the living lady who still loved him:

"Bright as the bow that spans the storm,
In Erin's yellow vesture clad,
A son of light, a lovely form,
He comes and makes her glad.

[1] "Poems on Several Occasions," 327.

[2] Duyckinck, "Cyclopædia of American Literature," ed. by M. L. Simons, i. 349.

Now on the grass-green turf he sits,
His tasseled horn beside him laid ;
Now o'er the hills in chase he flits—
The hunter and the deer—a shade ! "[1]

The truth of history compels us to mention that the last line in that exquisite passage, which is also its best line, had already appeared in print several years before, in a little poem of Freneau's entitled " The Indian Burying Ground," and in this fine stanza:

" By midnight moons, o'er moistening dews,
In vestments for the chase arrayed,
The hunter still the deer pursues,
The hunter and the deer—a shade." [2]

Moreover, a similar depredation was committed upon Freneau by a writer of far greater genius than Campbell, and under far less need than he to help himself in that way to other people's property. Every reader of " Marmion " will have noticed a certain fine stroke in the " Introduction to Canto Third," where the poet, in his apostrophe to the heroic Duke of Brunswick, exclaims,—

" Lamented chief !—not thine the power
To save in that illustrious hour,
When Prussia hurried to the field,
And snatched the spear—but left the shield." [3]

Here, again, the last and the best line of the passage is borrowed—with the change of a single word, and also without acknowledgment—from a poem of Freneau's entitled " To the Memory of the Brave Americans, under General Greene, who fell in the Action of September 8, 1781," [4] a poem of which Sir Walter Scott long afterward said, that it was

[1] " The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Campbell," 58.
[2] " Poems on Several Occasions," 89.
[3] " The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott," ii. 130.
[4] " The Poems of Philip Freneau," 203–204.

"as fine a thing as there is of the kind in the language."[1] Perhaps, however, in all the record that might be made of these oblique transmarine tributes to the poetic worth of Philip Freneau, nothing is more notable for its generous largeness of furtive appreciation, than the homage which was paid to him by a high-born British lady—a sister of Sir Everard Home—one Mistress Anne Hunter, who, in 1802, published a volume of poems wherein she gave prominence to a plaintive ballad which she entitled "The Death Song," and which, putting it forward as her own, she described as having been "written for, and adapted to, an original Indian air." In an ingenuous note, the good lady sweetly tells us just how the idea of writing the poem had first occurred to her, and just what was her artistic purpose in writing it, namely, "to give something of the characteristic spirit and sentiment of those brave savages."[2] Twenty-five years afterward, among the verses chosen by Alexander Dyce to represent her work in his "Specimens of British Poetesses," a place was given to "The Death Song"; whereupon, the editor of "Blackwood's Magazine" singled out this particular poem of hers as the one most worthy of praise. "Her 'Death Song,'" said he, "is a noble strain, almost worthy of Campbell himself."[3] Would any British critic, in that acrimonious time, have bestowed such applause on Mrs. Hunter's "Death-Song," had he known that, except for a few mutilations, it was not Mrs. Hunter's at all, but Philip Freneau's, by whom it had been published in an American magazine[4] many years before, over his own name, and under the full title of "The Death-Song of a Cherokee Indian"? At any rate, the poet who was capable of producing lines fit to be thus blended with their own

[1] This was said to Mr. Henry Brevoort, who reported the conversation to the brothers Duyckinck. "Cyclopædia of American Literature," i. 349.

[2] Mrs. Hunter's volume I have not seen. These sentences are cited by Duyckinck, ibid. 355 n, from Maria Edgeworth's "Rosamond," where once more poor Freneau's work is quoted—and the honor given to some one else.

[3] "Blackwood's Magazine," xli. 409.

[4] "The American Museum," i. 77, in 1787.

by Thomas Campbell and Walter Scott, and of such true lustre as to catch the eye of any critical reader, as they sparkled among those gems of poetic strass with which they were intermingled by the honorable lady who had condescended to claim them as her own, was not forced into the field of satire for lack of genius to succeed in some higher sphere of poetry.

IX.

It is a striking proof of the genuine poetic life then beginning to spring up in America—though soon to be crushed down again by the turbulence of the times—that the year 1770—the year in which Wordsworth was born—proved to be for Philip Freneau, then a college lad of eighteen, a year of uncommon prolificacy in the production of verse, and of verse which, like Wordworth's, and of course long before Wordsworth's, was emancipated from the poetic mannerisms of that age. For example, "The Power of Fancy," in rhymed tetrameters—alert, elastic, full of music and motion—wholly discards the sing-song, the artificial phraseology, and the stilted movement then so common in English poetry, and breathes out a lively and sweet note, at once reminiscent of the minor verse of Milton in the century before, and prophetic, also, of some strains of the Lake Poets in the century after :

"Wakeful, vagrant, restless thing,
Ever wandering on the wing,
Who thy wondrous source can find,
FANCY, regent of the mind!
. . . . . .
On the surface of the brain
Night after night she walks unseen;
Noble fabrics doth she raise
In the woods or on the seas,
On some high, steep, pointed rock,
Where the billows loudly knock,

And the dreary tempests sweep
Clouds along the uncivil deep.

"Lo! she walks upon the moon,
Listens to the chimy tune
Of the bright harmonious spheres,
And the song of angels hears;
Sees this earth a distant star,
Pendent, floating in the air;
Leads me to some lonely dome,
Where Religion loves to come,
Where the bride of Jesus dwells,
And the deep-toned organ swells
In notes with lofty anthems joined—
Notes that half distract the mind.

"Now like lightning she descends
To the prison of the Fiends,
Hears the rattling of the chains,
Feels their never-ceasing pains—
But, O never may she tell
Half the frightfulness of hell.

. . . . . .

"Lo! she leads me wide and far,
Sense can never follow her—
Shape thy course o'er land and sea,
Help me to keep pace with thee,
Lead me to yon chalky cliff,
Over rock and over reef,
Into Britain's fertile land
Stretching far her proud command:
Look back and view, through many a year,
Cæsar, Julius Cæsar, there.

. . . . . .

"FANCY, thou the Muses' pride,
In thy painted realms reside,
Endless images of things,
Fluttering each on golden wings,

Ideal objects, such a store,
The universe could hold no more:
FANCY, to thy power I owe
Half my happiness below;
By thee Elysian groves were made,
Thine were the notes that Orpheus played;
By thee was Pluto charmed so well
While rapture seized the sons of hell;
Come, O come, perceived by none,
You and I will walk alone."[1]

So, too, in Freneau's little poem called "Retirement," written probably a year or two after Wordsworth was born, one catches tones that anticipate the poetic and spiritual traits of that mighty maker and master of the new era of English song,—his love of nature and of solitude, his moral independence, his serenity, his joyous unworldliness, even his simplicity of form:

"A hermit's house beside a stream,
With forests planted round,
Whatever it to you may seem,
More real happiness I deem
Than if I were a monarch crowned.

"A cottage I could call my own,
Remote from domes of care;
A little garden, walled with stone,
The wall with ivy overgrown,
A limpid fountain near,

"Would more substantial joys afford,
More real bliss impart,
Than all the wealth that misers hoard,
Than vanquished worlds, or worlds restored,—
Mere cankers of the heart!

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 21–25.

"Vain foolish man! how vast thy pride,
How little can thy wants supply!—
'T is surely wrong to grasp so wide—
To act as if we only had
To triumph—not to die!"[1]

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 52.

CHAPTER IX.

BEGINNINGS OF NEW LIFE IN VERSE AND PROSE: NEW ENGLAND. 1763–1775.

I.—The intellectual activity of New England expressed in religious discourse, in historical narrative, and in controversy—The lack of poetic life there—Benjamin Church—Phillis Wheatly.

II.—The promise of higher work in American letters centres in two young men, Philip Freneau at Princeton, and John Trumbull at New Haven—Trumbull's ancestry—His intellectual precocity.

III.—Trumbull as an undergraduate at Yale College from 1763 to 1767—As a graduate-student from 1767 to 1770—The range and character of his scholarship—A group of clever young men of letters associated with him there—Their admiration for the Queen Anne writers.

IV.—Trumbull's first publication, a series of ten essays called "The Meddler," 1769 to 1770.

V.—Trumbull publishes the first eight of the essays of "The Correspondent," February to July, 1770—The new tone in American letters.

VI.—Trumbull's plea in 1770 for the fine arts in America, especially for the æsthetic quality in literature.

VII.—Recognition of Trumbull's poetic promise in 1770—A tutor at Yale from 1771 to 1773—Tries to give a more modern and literary tone to its studies—His own models in English verse—His "Ode to Sleep," in 1773.

VIII.—Trumbull publishes, in 1773, a new series of the essays of "The Correspondent."

IX.—Trumbull's place as a social satirist in verse—The quality of his satire—His satirical trilogy, "The Progress of Dullness."

I.

FROM the earliest colonial days, the town of Boston had been the chief seat of intellectual activity in New England; but such activity had there found its favorite employment in religious discourse, in historical narrative, and in controversy—theological or political. This was particularly the case during the period of the Revolution. Able sermon-writers there were then in eastern Massachusetts, clever

political essayists, and two or three historians of no contemptible ability; but the most persevering search into what has survived of the writings produced in that neighborhood, between the years 1763 and 1783, has thus far failed to reveal to our eyes any token of promise for genuine work in poetry in that part of the world. Even those highly-wrought fabrications in the nature of classical tragedy, which were elaborated by Mercy Otis Warren during the anguish of that time, furnish no materials for an exception to the statement just made. Indeed, the depth of the poetic poverty into which that very cultivated community had then fallen, can perhaps be indicated in no more conclusive way than by a frank mention of the two most conspicuous verse-writers whom Boston has to offer to our notice for the entire period now under consideration.

One of these was Benjamin Church, physician, politician, essayist, and poet,—a man of glib and fervid expression, with numerous showy gifts, but shallow, volatile, false. He was born in 1734; he was graduated at Harvard in 1754; he was thereafter for some time a student of medicine in London; and from the date of his return to Massachusetts, about the year 1756, to that of his enforced and ignominious departure from it, about twenty years later, he was lavish in his literary tributes to the public,—the chief of them being, in 1757, a didactic poem, entitled "The Choice"; in 1761, a poem in "Pietas and Gratulatio"; in 1765, "The Times, a Poem by an American," being a rather toothless satire on the Stamp Act and other political atrocities[1]; in 1766, an "Elegy on the Death of the Reverend Jonathan Mayhew"; in 1769, a poem in vituperation of Sir Francis Bernard, entitled "An Address to a Provincial Bashaw"; in 1770, "An Elegy to the Memory of . . . the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield"; and, in 1773, the municipal oration on the Boston massacre.[2] No complete

[1] A full reprint of this satire may be found in Kettell, "Specimens of American Poetry," i. 149–156.

[2] Reprinted in Niles, "Principles and Acts," etc., 8–12.

report can now be made, or would be worth making, of this man's other scribblements,—beyond number or recognition, in prose and verse, argumentative, sentimental, comic, eulogistic, abusive,—the writer himself masquerading under various pseudonyms, and advocating with equal zeal the opposite sides of the same political question. Finally, of all the productions of this loquacious charlatan, nothing seems deserving of further recall, unless it be two stanzas in his tribute to Jonathan Mayhew, wherein, apparently unconscious of the possible application to himself of the latter part of them, he gives it as the function of the Muse:

"Deep into times rolled by, to dart her ken;
At the tribunal of the lordly mind,
T' arraign the conduct of the mightiest men,
Acquit, or doom, the Nimrods of mankind;

"To sift the motive stript of wily glare,
And through each cell the lurking guilt pursue,—
The heart dissecting, till the bottom bare
Betrays the villain to the naked view."[1]

The other prominent representative of the town of Boston in the poetry of this period is Phillis Wheatly, a gentle-natured and intelligent slave-girl, whose name still survives among us in the shape of a tradition vaguely testifying to the existence of poetic talent in this particular member of the African race. Unfortunately, a glance at what she wrote will show that there is no adequate basis for such tradition, and that the significance of her career belongs rather to the domain of anthropology, or of hagiology, than to that of poetry—whether American or African. Her verses, which were first published in a collected form in London in 1773, under the title of "Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral," attracted for a time consid-

[1] "Elegy on —— Mayhew," 4. By the courtesy of the Boston Athenæum I had the use of its copy of this poem,—a copy which once belonged to A. Eliot, and in which the poem is attributed to Church.

erable curiosity, both in England and in America,—not at all, however, because the verses were good, but because they were written by one from whom even bad verses were too good to be expected. In 1784, under her new name of Phillis Peters, she published in Boston a poem entitled "Liberty and Peace," suggested by the happy ending of the Revolutionary war. This production, however, makes no change in the evidence touching her poetic gifts.[1]

II.

To any one who may care to bring together and to scrutinize the multitudinous productions of American writers for the period now under review, it will become plain that, at about the year 1770, the chief hope for a new and stronger life among us, either in poetry or in prose, lay in the destinies of two very young men, one of them, Philip Freneau, an undergraduate at Princeton, the other, John Trumbull, a graduate-student still in residence at Yale; both of them at about that time doing things that denoted the presence here of finer poetic genius than had yet spoken out on this side of the Atlantic; both of them, also, afterward driven by the storms of the Revolution, at first reluctantly and under protest, into the service of the country as political satirists. In a previous chapter, some account has been given of the early training and equipment, and of the early poetic work, of Freneau. A similar account has now to be given of Trumbull, especially for the period of his literary life prior to his engulfment in the ferocious controversies of the Revolution.[2]

[1] A little book, entitled "Letters of Phillis Wheatly, the Negro-Slave Poet of Boston," and edited by Charles Deane, was privately printed in Boston in 1864,—at a time when testimony as to the intellectual capacity of the negro race was much desired. But poor Phillis's efforts in prose have no more value in that direction than have her efforts in verse,—these letters being little else than pious and almost infantile platitudes expressed in extremely stilted English.

[2] For his livelihood, Trumbull early adopted the profession of the law,—a profession which, in America, has thus far been the receptacle and the tomb for much talent that under other conditions would have found a more congenial

John Trumbull was born in Waterbury, Connecticut, on the 24th of April, 1750. Both on his father's side and on his mother's he was of the pure Brahmin stock of New England,—a stock prolific of scholars, teachers, magistrates, and divines. Moreover, the very name of Trumbull, if we may yield our faith to a picturesque tradition, was originally the coinage and the grateful gift of an English king, who owed his life to the valor of the earliest perceptible ancestor of this family. As King Henry—the tradition very properly shuns the vulgarity of being too specific—was one day walking in the park, a mad bull, which had escaped from Smithfield and was filled with a diabolical spirit of murder, made at his majesty, and was about to gore his sacred person, when a yeoman of his guard rushed upon the scene, and, at the peril of his own life, saved that of the king. For this good deed, the king gave his yeoman a pension of one hundred marks a year; also the expressive name of Turnbull; likewise a coat-of-arms copiously enriched with the appropriate taurine imagery, to wit, "three bulls' heads, with their fronts displayed, and a bull's head for the crest."[1]

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and a more illustrious employment in literature. In spite of frequent interruptions from frail bodily health, Trumbull became an eminent lawyer. In due time, he was made State Attorney for the County of Hartford, member of the legislature, a Judge of the Superior Court of the State, and finally a Judge of its Supreme Court of Errors. In the year 1825, being then seventy-five years of age, he went to live with his daughter, Mrs. William Woodbridge, at Detroit —at that time a petty though ancient post in the depths of the American wilderness. Soon after setting forth upon that long and arduous journey, the old lawyer and poet tarried awhile in New York, where he was entertained at a great banquet given in his honor by the lawyers and men of letters of that city. In Detroit he remained until his death in 1831; and his grave, marked by a fitting monument, is in the beautiful cemetery of Elmwood, near that city. Through the friendship of his grandson, Mr. Dudley Bradstreet Woodbridge, —a friendship which began between us in my own boyhood,—I have had access to the private papers of John Trumbull; and from these I have been enabled, in the present volume, to make considerable additions to what has hitherto been known in our time concerning the very striking early work, both in prose and in verse, of the author of "M'Fingal." To these papers I shall refer in my footnotes as Trumbull MSS.

[1] Trumbull MSS.

Sometime afterward, one of this yeoman's posterity, having married an heiress in the west of England, and being anxious to disguise the plebeian suggestiveness of his name, —which in sooth might bespeak an ancestral butcher or herdsman quite as well as hero,—procured the same to be changed to Trumbull. Although the most noted American branch of the family wear their patronymic in this transposed form, something of the fearlessness which gained for the original Turn-bull his valor-breathing name, seems to have survived in that particular member of the family, whose acquaintance we are now about to make, and who, as a social and political satirist, went forth betimes and defied the horns of many a monster, madder perhaps, and more dangerous, than the mad bull of Smithfield.

Should John Trumbull cease to be remembered among us for his achievements as a grown-up man, it may be safe to say that he will still deserve some sort of renown for the prodigies he wrought while yet in his babyhood, and immediately after that brilliant epoch in his career. In the records of intellectual precocity, scarcely anything can be cited more remarkable than some of the things that are recorded of this amazing little creature at a period of life when ordinary mortals are sufficiently employed in absorbing and digesting a lacteal diet and in getting forward with their primary set of teeth. Before he was two years old, he could say by heart all the verses in the "Primer," and all of Watts's "Divine Songs for Children." As soon as he had reached the considerable age of two, he began to learn to read; which mystery he acquired within the next half-year. Even prior to the age of four, he had read the entire Bible through; and by that year he had also read all of Watts's "Lyrics,"[1] and was able to repeat them all without book. Emulous, no doubt, of the laurels of the heavenly and much desired Watts, he began at about the age of four to

[1] Stiles, "Itinerary," iv. 204, MS. Probably an American selection from the "Horæ Lyricæ" is meant.

make verses for himself, as much as possible in the true Wattsian manner; but not having as yet advanced so far in learning as to be able to write, he could only preserve these valuable productions by storing them away in his memory. At five, being still unable to write, he hit upon the device of transcribing his verses by imitating printed letters. His first attempt of this kind consisted of four stanzas of an original hymn, and his "scrawl of it filled a complete sheet of paper."[1] Having perceived a want of connection between the third and the fourth lines of one of his stanzas, this weird urchin was greatly perplexed thereby; but "after lying awake some nights," meditating upon the problem, he finally solved it by the proper verbal corrections. Near the end of his fifth year, his father, who was the village-pastor at Waterbury, received into his house as a pupil, to be instructed for admission to Yale College, a lad of seventeen years, one William Southmayd. At the outset, this lad was required to learn both the Latin Accidence and Lilly's Latin Grammar; also, with the help of a translation, to construe the Select Colloquies of Corderius. While the anguish of this task was in progress, the pastor's little boy, loitering unobserved in the study, was accustomed to listen to the Latin words which were spoken by teacher and pupil; and in this way, before his father knew of it, he had learned one half of Lilly's Grammar. For example, he "learned 'Quæ genus' by heart in a day." When at last the pastor became aware of these secret depredations upon classical knowledge on the part of his son, he allowed the little fellow to join regularly in the work, in which indeed the youngster soon outstripped the elder student; and in September of the following year, 1757, the two lads, one being nineteen years of age, and the other seven, "were presented at college, examined by the tutors, and admitted as members."[2] On this occasion, a boy of twelve years, Nathaniel Emmons, afterward famous as a theologian, held the little candidate on his lap, while the exam-

[1] Trumbull MSS. [2] Trumbull, "Poetical Works," ed. 1820, Mem. 10.

ination proceeded.[1] What were the requirements at that time exacted for admission to Yale College may be seen in the following statute printed in the year 1759: "Admissionem in hoc Collegium Nemo expectet, nisi qui é Præsidis et Tutorum Examine, Tullium, Virgilium et Testamentum Græcum extemporè legere, ad Unguem redere, ac grammaticè resolvere, et Prosâ veram Latinitatem scribere potuerit; et Prosodiæ ac Arithmetices vulgaris Regulas perdidicerit: atque Testimonium idoneum de Vitâ ac Moribus inculpatis exhibuerit."[2] Long afterward, Trumbull himself stated to President Stiles that within the year and a half now referred to he had "learned Cordery, Tully's XII Select Orations, Virgil's Eclogues, and all the Æneid (not Georg.), and 4 Gospels in Greek."[3]

It need not surprise us that the success of so young a boy in passing these requirements, seemed at that time a marvel fit to be chronicled in the newspapers. "The Connecticut Gazette," for September 24, 1757, mentions it in these words: "At the Commencement in this Town the 14th Instant, . . . among those that appear'd to be examined for Admission, was the Son of the Rev'd Mr. Trumble, of Waterbury, who passed a good Examination, altho' but little more than seven Years of Age; but on account of his Youth his Father does not intend he shall at present continue at College."[4]

In consequence of this sensible decision on the part of the "Rev'd Mr. Trumble," our juvenile phenomenon was kept at home six years longer; during which period, of course, his brain could not remain idle. For one thing, he then made a still more extended reading of the Greek and Roman authors, especially of Homer, Horace, and Cicero.

[1] E. A. Park, in "Works of Emmons," i. page clxviii.

[2] For a copy of this statute, I am indebted to Professor F. B. Dexter, M.A., Registrar of the Faculty, and author of "Sketch of the History of Yale University," and of two volumes of "Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College."

[3] Stiles, "Itinerary 1785–8," iv. 204–5, MS.

[4] J. Hammond Trumbull, "The Origin of M'Fingal," 6 n.

Not many books in English literature were to be found in his father's library, which consisted chiefly of theological writings and of the ancient classics. At the age of eight, however, the boy read for the first time "Paradise Lost," Thomson's "Seasons," an English version of "Telemachus," and, above all, "The Spectator"; and upon this not ill-assorted stock of modern literature, he continued to nourish his spirit until he went to college.[1] Before he reached the age of nine, he had put into English verse one half of "The Psalms of David"; but in the midst of this labor, he happened to fall in with Watts's version, whereupon, in despair, he "laid aside and burnt his own."[2] Moreover, he had a memory so quick and tenacious that, even as a child, he was sometimes induced to test its powers by feats performed for a wager. Thus, when nine years old, he attempted under such stimulus to commit to memory in a quarter of an hour the Hungarian version of the Lord's Prayer, as given in Salmon's "Geographical and Historical Grammar." He more than won the bet; for, after learning the Lord's prayer in the Hungarian language, he had time enough left over to learn it in Malabar also; and both versions he retained in memory as late as twenty-nine years afterward, when he repeated one of them to President Stiles.[3]

III.

In September, 1763, being then thirteen years of age, he was deemed old enough to take up his residence at the college; but as he had by that time read nearly all the Greek and Latin authors studied there, he was advised by his tutor to give his chief attention to algebra, geometry, and astronomy, which he did during the first three years of his course as an undergraduate.[4] In his senior year, however, he went back to his earlier studies in English literature, having, of course, access to a much wider range of authors

[1] Stiles, "Itinerary," M.S. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.
[4] Trumbull, "Poetical Works," ed. 1820, Mem. 11.

than he had enjoyed at his father's house. Taking his first degree in 1767, he continued to reside at the college as Dean's Scholar until 1770, in which year he received the degree of Master.

Those years, from 1767 to 1770, were for him a period of the most delightful and the most fruitful activity in literary culture. His time was his own; he had the stimulus of congenial literary companionship; and he seems to have given himself up, with unbounded enjoyment, to a prolonged and critical study of what was then called "polite literature." During those years he read, in some cases for the second or third time, "all the Greek and Latin classics, especially the poets and orators"; while to the writers then dominant in English literature, he surrendered himself with great zest, delighting in their gayety of tone and in their lightness of touch, and trying to reproduce their manner in literary experiments of his own. It should be mentioned, too, that there were among his contemporaries at Yale several young fellows of unusual ability, and with literary tastes not unlike his own,—such as Joseph Howe, Buckingham St. John, Timothy Dwight, Joseph Buckminster, and David Humphreys,—young fellows of Puritan ancestry and of Puritan nurture, and with an ineradicable strain of Puritan earnestness, yet elate like himself with brilliant gifts, full of the fire, mirth, and ambition of youth, and all aglow with enthusiasm for the later English poets, essayists, and satirists, whose writings brought to them the spell of a higher and a finer literary method than had hitherto been known in America; and sent the unwonted charm of urbane criticism and of high-bred playfulness down into the ponderous and uncouth erudition, the grimness, the provincialism, the controversial truculence, then to some degree characteristic of the intellectual life of New England.

IV.

Trumbull's earliest literary undertaking was a series of essays, the form and tone of which he caught from the

Queen Anne writers, particularly Addison and Steele. These essays, which bore the happy title of "The Meddler," and were "chiefly of the moral, critical, and poetical kind, upon miscellaneous and mostly disconnected subjects,"[1] made their appearance in "The Boston Chronicle," beginning with the 4th of September, 1769, and ending with the 22d of January, 1770.[2] Each number is decorated with a Latin quotation, usually from Persius, or Horace, or Vergil. Under the masque of his pseudonym, the author makes playful allusion to his own pretended foibles, and to those of a few literary friends whom he meets at his club,—such as Mr. Thomas Freeman, John Manly, Esq., and "the youthful gay Jack Dapperwit, who is lineally descended from the famous Tom Dapperwit." Moreover, in this literary undertaking, he frankly avows an æsthetic purpose, as something quite aside from that practical, strenuous, and hortatory function to which literature had been commonly subjected in that quarter of the world. "My essays," says he, "are chiefly designed for the entertainment of those who have some acquaintance with polite literature; but among the various subjects I shall discuss, I hope every person may find something of humor, instruction, or amusement, that will repay the trouble of a perusal. In the

[1] Trumbull, MSS. My citations from the early prose essays of Trumbull are made from copies which he left in his own handwriting, and which are now in my possession.

[2] The following are the dates of the publication of the entire series:—

No. 1, Sep. 4–7, 1769;
No. 2, Sep. 14–18;
No. 3, Oct. 23–26;
No. 4, Oct. 30–Nov. 2;
No. 5, Nov. 9–13;
No. 6, Nov. 30–Dec. 4;
No. 7, Dec. 18–21;
No. 8, Dec. 28, 1769–Jan. 1, 1770;
No. 9, Jan. 11–15;
No. 10, Jan. 18–22.

Numbers 4, 6, and 9 are probably not by Trumbull, but by one or more of his literary associates. In ascertaining the foregoing dates, I used the file of "The Boston Chronicle" belonging to the library of Yale University.

meantime, I think myself well employed in contributing my assistance (how trifling soever it may be) towards instructing the ignorant, diverting and improving the learned, rectifying the taste and manners of the times, and cultivating the fine arts in this land." [1]

His aptitude for the work of censor of conversation and manners, is well shown in the second essay, which is an exposition of true and false wit. "True wit is always accompanied with good nature, politeness, and a fine taste; the false, with the grossest offenses against modesty, good manners, and good sense. I shall not say much at present concerning wit in writing. We are happily passed the age or era of Pun, Crambo, Anagram, and Acrostic. Yet I cannot but observe that the magazines and such miscellaneous repositories have lately been stuffed with a new kind of vermin, begotten between the Anagram and Riddle, called the Rebus, which is the most pure, refined, and sublimated kind of nonsense that hath appeared in any age." Among the several kinds of false wit then often displayed in conversation, is that special form of raillery "which consists in putting modest people to the blush, by insulting and exposing them for every folly or defect that is reported of them, of their relations, or the town or country to which they belong. Whosoever would succeed in this way, must be possessed of the most matchless and unparalleled impudence; must be a perfect master of scandal and defamation; and must apply himself with the greatest assiduity to studying the noble art of lying. . . . When by these means he has attained to perfection, I will engage that his practice shall be crowned with the laughter of fools, the blushes of the modest, and the contempt of the wise." [2]

In the fifth number is introduced a contributor who describes himself "as a member of the fraternity of authors." "I have for a long time," he adds, "been a retailer, or rather a peddler, in wit; but my stock is so small and my credit so low, that I am in danger of bankruptcy.

[1] Trumbull MSS. [2] Ibid.

I have published essays, songs, jests, satires, almanacs, controversy, politics, prophecies, and letters to a friend; all which the ungrateful world have neglected and despised; so that I must abandon the trade, unless I obtain your speedy assistance." "In my productions," he goes on to say, "I shall assume the title of a Schemer,—for which I think myself pretty well qualified; having always been obliged to live by my wits, and employ myself in contriving schemes for the payment of an old debt, or the contraction of a new one. . . . I have in writing innumerable schemes on all subjects, having in happier days been schemer to one general, two prime ministers, several misers, and many neglected marriage-seekers of both sexes, for whom I have invented infallible schemes to win a place, an estate, a battle, a husband, or a wife, according to the respective wants of each petitioner. I have farther, as became my circumstances, deeply studied the rules of praise and commendation, and read critically the productions of flattery in all ages. . . . From these, especially from the poetical addresses of Dryden, the odes of Boileau in praise of the French king, the ministerial writers of the present day, and the whole herd of moneyless poets, I have extracted and compounded an essay which I esteem the quintessence of panegyric and the very marrow of dedication. This, if a few blanks were filled with the name and titles of some person of quality, would make a splendid appearance at the beginning of your 'Meddler,' if ever those papers should be published in a volume by themselves."[1]

In the essays which follow, this lively and versatile contributor makes his appearance more than once, and each time with something which adds to their piquant flavor. Here, for example, is an advertisement which he has prepared for the use of a young lady at the successful close of a series of four annual campaigns which she had conducted for the capture of a husband:

[1] Trumbull MSS.

" Advertisement.

To Be Sold At Public Vendue,

The Whole Estate Of

Isabella Sprightly, Toast and Coquette,

(Now retiring from Business).

" Imprimis, all the Tools and Utensils necessary for carrying on the Trade, viz. Several bundles of Darts and Arrows, well-pointed, and capable of doing great execution; A considerable quantity of Patches, Paint, Brushes, and Cosmetics, for plastering, painting and whitewashing the face; a complete set of caps, ' a la mode a Paris,' of all sizes from five to fifteen inches in height; With several dozens of Cupids, very proper to be stationed on a ruby lip, a diamond eye, or a roseate cheek.

" Item, as she proposes by certain ceremonies to transform one of her humble servants into an husband, and keep him for her own use, she offers for sale, Florio, Daphnis, Cynthio, and Cleanthes, with several others, whom she won by a constant attendance on business during the space of four years. She can prove her indisputable right thus to dispose of them, by certain deeds of gifts, bills of sale, and attestations, vulgarly called love-letters, under their own hands and seals. They will be offered very cheap, for they are all of them either broken-hearted, consumptive, or in a dying condition. Nay, some of them have been dead this half year, as they declare and testify in the above-mentioned writings.

" N.B. Their hearts will be sold separately." [1]

In another essay, the same vivacious contributor enters into that great controversy between the moderns and the ancients, which was one of the burning questions of the

[1] Trumbull MSS.

eighteenth century: "The moralists of our time . . . complain that men are dwindling down in arithmetical progression from the gigantic size of our forefather Goliath, towards a pygmean stature, to which they expect posterity will in a few centuries arrive. But they more especially maintain that we fall short of the ancients in the height, length, and breadth of our understandings; and seem to think that nature at first dealt out the stock of brains, designed for man, with too lavish a hand, and that we are now forced to take up with the scrapings of the dish. I have always wondered that this opinion hath been so long maintained; and that for two very substantial reasons: first, because I have observed that no one will, as to his particular self, allow that he is in the least degree less wise than his ancestors; and, secondly, because I do not think the opinion itself is founded either in truth or reason. For I cannot discover from Scripture or tradition that Adam was one inch above six feet high, or had more wit to avoid being cheated than thousands of the present generation." He then proceeds to demonstrate that the moderns, instead of being inferior to the ancients, are actually superior to them "in all the polite arts and sciences." "By these," he continues, "I mean dress, dancing, compliments, curses, drinking, swearing, gaming, poetry, fighting, and dying, and in a word every qualification of a gentleman and a man of honor in the modern acceptation of those titles." Then follows some excellent drollery on these several claims, in the course of which he has a capital parody on the pompous style then so much admired in Hervey's "Meditations." After dealing with several matters of dress and society, in which he asserts superiority for the moderns, he comes to "the art of cursing and swearing," which, as he argues, "is almost wholly of modern invention. Aristophanes, Plautus, Terence, Horace, and a few others who might perhaps have been gentlemen, had they lived in these days, do indeed make a few slight attempts at the practice; but they have not an oath or a curse fit for the mouth of a modern

gentleman. I cannot but congratulate my contemporaries on their improvements in this art, which they have carried to such wonderful length, that the lowest dregs of the people have attained to a facility and perfection that cannot be excelled by the politest of the nobility." As to the single item of poetry, however, he is obliged to confess that the superiority of the moderns is not quite so easy to prove: "Poetry being looked upon as the lowest qualification of a gentleman, is indeed somewhat neglected in this age. As advocate for the moderns, I will use the best argument I can in their favor. It is a well known maxim, that every poet is a fool. If this be true, I believe no one who has read thus far, will doubt of our ample qualifications for that office. As to the duration of modern poetry, we indeed make no great pretensions. The ancient art of embalming, which extended to their writings, as well as to their bodies, hath been for many ages lost and unknown; and our works, like the good man's, follow us into the grave." [1]

The tenth and last of these essays has for its motto a few words from Juvenal,[2]

"Nostri farrago libelli est."

As might be expected from such a text, the discourse which follows is itself a medley of disconnected topics, some of which, indeed, have a very sparkling treatment. "My entertainments," says the author, "have usually consisted of one or two plain dishes; but finding some people desire a greater variety, I shall at present furnish out my table with a mixture of olios, fricassees, ragouts, tarts, and sweetmeats, and beg of the reader, without making any wry faces, to sit down and fall on without any ceremony." One of the tarts which the host thus sets before his guests is this: "Many of my country readers have wondered at my description of the gentry in town, in my last essay, where I represented them as rising at noon, and making the after-

[1] Trumbull MSS.

[2] "Saturæ," i. 86

noon the only busy part of the day. I will therefore tell them, for their further information, that by the encouragement and assistance of people in great towns, the Afternoon hath of late made great encroachments upon its neighbors, and strangely justled and discomposed the other parts of the day. It hath driven forward the Morning from its proper station, and forced it to take refuge in the habitation of Noon; it hath made Breakfast and Dinner shake hands, and been the total destruction of Supper; it hath devoured a large portion of Night, and unless a speedy stop be put to its motion, may probably swallow up the whole four and twenty Hours." And here is one of the sweetmeats: "There is no figure more employed by the present race of wits and satirists than the Periphrasis, or, in modern language, the Circumbendibus. To call a man a hog, is by no means allowable; but if we exalt the expression, and say he is that animal before which we are commanded not to throw pearls, it becomes extremely witty, polite and delicate, and may be used by a Doctor of Divinity with the greatest facility and pleasure." [1]

Stirred by the new forms of literary expression which Trumbull and his friends had found in later English literature, these young men began to take a somewhat contemptuous and even a revolutionary attitude toward the narrow scope and the hard jejune methods then prevailing in the curriculum at Yale, as well as toward the tone and spirit of nearly the entire body of writers who, in that neighborhood, then had the ear of the public. Indeed, the whole field of American letters seemed at that time to be abandoned to controversy, political, theological, and otherwise. Such controversy, moreover, was carried on with the absurd pedantry, the unrelenting partisanship, the extravagance of misrepresentation, the anger, the coarseness, the barbarous incivility with which, in those days, even cultivated persons thought it proper to convey to one another their ideas on subjects concerning which they happened to

[1] Trumbull MSS.

disagree. As Trumbull himself long afterward described the situation, "Every pamphlet, every newspaper, was filled with metaphysics; the press groaned with controversy; and the world was stunned with Sermons, Letters of Debate, Replies and Rejoinders, Dialogues between Ministers and Parishioners, and such like weapons of this spiritual warfare, whose names it would tire one to reckon up." [1]

V.

Here, then, as it seemed to the young satirist, looking down upon it from his cheery watch-tower in the college, was a situation which could best be dealt with by ridicule; and in his next series of essays, to which he was prompted by his recognition of this fact, we may once more observe something of the new tone that was coming into American letters,—urbanity, perspective, moderation of emphasis, satire, especially satire on its more playful side,—that of irony. It was in February, 1770, that he began publishing in "The Connecticut Journal and New Haven Post-Boy," a series of essays which he entitled "The Correspondent," and which are also avowedly framed after the model of "The Spectator." Though the writer was then but a youth of twenty, these essays show in him no inconsiderable maturity of thought and keenness of observation, and no slight success in catching the method of his literary masters. Already he was too much of an artist to flaunt in the face of his readers the serious motive of his work; and they who should find it out, were to come upon it unawares in the midst of the light-hearted mirth which pervades his sentences.

As his first essay is devoted chiefly to the task of self-introduction, it opens with a neatly turned explanation of the title which had been chosen by the author for the entire series. "There is," he says, "in the present age a most

[1] Trumbull MSS.

wonderful tendency to letter-writing. Every book that outgrows the size of a pamphlet, is ushered into the world by an epistolary dedication. Party and politics take on them the form of Letters to Lords and Members of Parliament; Religion and Morality, of Letters to a Friend. Nay, so far hath this humor been carried that the writers of weekly essays, not content with an universal correspondence, have sometimes on particular emergencies condescended to compose Letters to Themselves.

"But on account of the difficulties which some have met with in finding out proper persons to patronize their letters, I conceived it necessary that somebody should assume the character of an universal Correspondent, to receive letters from all the world, to return suitable answers, and to patronize such writings as nobody else would take notice of. Whether I am qualified for this post or not, the reader will best determine by giving me an opportunity to display my abilities. I therefore do hereby send greeting to all Scribblers whatsoever, to whom these presents shall come, whether Poets, Politicians, Almanack-Makers, Metaphysicians, or Writers of Advertisements, whose nightly toils for their country's edification have been rewarded only by the contempt of the world, promising that in every distress or perplexity, they shall find in me a most friendly patron, and be favored with my best advice and assistance. As the strongest instance of my universal charity and disinterested benevolence, even to the lowest objects of literary compassion, I desire the 'Plain Dealer,'[1] if ever he writes again, to dedicate his next essay to me; and on that condition, I engage my word and honor to read over every sentence of it, without one smile of derision at the unmeaning flourish of his style, or the barefaced sophistry of his reasoning: desiring him, however, for the sake of my credit with the rest of

[1] The name assumed by a "disciple of the metaphysical party," who had written much in the same paper, but of whom, after this, no more was heard.

the world, to avoid the usual custom of dedicators, and not be very lavish to me of his praise and panegyrics.

"But since it may be thought proper that I should follow my own rule, and throw my essays into the form of Letters, I do by these presents constitute the World for my Patron, and shall address myself to it in the following epistle. Though the method be a little singular, I hope it will give the reader as much satisfaction, as if it had been inscribed to a Member of Parliament, to my Lord What-d'-ye-call-him, to Messieurs Printers, to J. W., Esq., or from A Gentleman in the East to his Friend in the West: premising, in the first place, that if the reader find in it anything obscure and unintelligible, I desire him to suppose it very deep and mysterious, and to believe me a great genius and profound reasoner, and the matter far above his comprehension; by which means he may have an opportunity of extending his charity to me, in the same manner as it hath been often extended to other candidates for the metaphysical laurel."[1]

The essays which he thus began were continued from the 23d of February, until the 6th of July, 1770, at which date they had reached eight numbers; but few as they were, they attracted great attention, and were read with vast relish by a public unaccustomed to so sprightly a mode of discussion; and to the end of his life Trumbull himself felt pride in the fact that he had been the first in that neighborhood "who dared by satire to oppose the party of controversial scribblers," and to "set this part of America an example of the use of ridicule and humor" in controlling "the whims of dogmatical enthusiasts."[2] The very titles of the books of these dogmatical writers he parodies in sundry droll announcements of pretended works which he was about to give to the world, such as:

"Creeds and Catechisms Made and Mended by D.D.[3] &

[1] Trumbull MSS. [2] Ibid.

[3] Rev. Joseph Bellamy, D.D.

Company: Being the Substance of many Treatises that have lately made a Noise in the World."

"The Art of Quarreling; Being a Curious and Entertaining History of Some late Transactions."

"An Essay on Dancing[1]; Proving from the Examples of King David and others that it is a most grievous Iniquity, and directly contrary to the Eternal Fitness of Things. By the Pious ——."

"An Easy and Compendious Method of becoming a Great Man; With a few Hints on the Art of Climbing."

"The Art of Second-Sight, Shewing an Easy and Infallible Method of Discovering any Person's Character, Principles, Practices, State of Body and Soul, future Happiness or Misery, &c.; far Superior to Palmistry, Astrology, or any other Method of Fortune-telling: First introduced by a renowned Stage Player,[2] and since brought to Perfection by the united Labors of a certain Set of Philosophers."[3]

Some of the devices for self-display and for defamation, which were often resorted to by authors in the construction of the title-pages and advertisements of their books, he satirizes in the following kind and helpful suggestions addressed by him to his brethren of the literary guild:

"As to the decorations of your book, be sure to frame a very pompous title; for I can assure you there is much virtue in a title-page, and I have often known it, when duly managed, to contain all the wit and the greatest part of the arguments in the book. If you choose to answer some former writer, it may not be amiss to advertize him in the newspapers, after this manner:

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[1] A great outcry had just then been raised against this sinful practice.

[2] The Rev. George Whitefield.

[3] Trumbull MSS.

' Now in the Press
and will speedily be published,
A VINDICATION OF TRUE RELIGION,
FROM THE CAVILS OF IGNORANCE AND HERESY;
Being an Answer to the remarks of
The Rev'd Dunscotus:

" ' Wherein is clearly proved that the Remarker is clearly unacquainted with the true Spirit of the Gospel, that he hath wholly mistaken the subject of controversy, and hath been guilty of the most palpable blunders and absurdities: Concluding with a Catalogue of his Contradictions, and an Appendix shewing the coincidence of his opinions with those of Hobbes, Spinoza, and the Atheists and Deists in all ages.' " [1]

Then, too, as a satire on the self-complacence and the self-stultification often exhibited by those charming writers whose traits he has subjected to such careful study, he offers to the public " A New System of Logic," of which the two grand principles are: " First, That the common sense and reason of mankind is so weak and fallacious a guide, that its dictates ought never to be regarded; Secondly, That nevertheless nothing is so great that it can surpass, or so perplexing that it can entangle, the understanding of a true metaphysician." " I take these points to be so nearly self-evident," he continues, " that although I can say very little in proof of them, the reader ought for this very reason the more firmly to believe them. For such is the nature of every self-evident proposition that no arguments can be brought to prove it. . . . Hence, it is plain (if I have any skill in metaphysics) that when a point is very difficult

[1] MSS. This burlesque has allusion to Dr. Samuel Hopkins, whose answer to Mills gives a catalogue of about forty contradictions he professes to find in the work of the latter; also, to Dr. James Dana, whose answer to Jonathan Edwards's treatise on the Will contains several pages of extracts from Hobbes, Gordon, and other deistical writers, collated with extracts from Edwards.

to be proved, and all the arguments you can urge in its favor very weak and little to the point, it is not far from being a self-evident proposition." [1]

Furthermore, still personating the character of a disputatious metaphysician, and speaking in the name of his entire class, he goes on to explain the feud existing between themselves and that vulgar standard of opinion for which a superstitious esteem was still cherished among the non-metaphysical rabble: "A great enmity hath in all ages subsisted between metaphysics and common sense. They were, indeed, partly reconciled some years ago by a certain great author [2] among us, and continued pretty good friends for a considerable time. By these means, metaphysics was introduced into the best company, and was greatly esteemed by the most sensible part of the world; but having naturally a disposition to ramble and change sides, it hath been again seduced to revolt from common sense, and they are now at greater variance than ever. Therefore, by all the rules of justice, we who fight under the banner of metaphysics have a right to treat common sense as a common enemy, to speak all the ill we can of it, and to regard it as little as possible, both in conversation and writing." [3]

Finally, he reaches the culmination of his satirical eulogy upon his literary brethren, by showing the great and peculiar service they are constantly rendering to the bewildered race of mortals: "Though the world of itself be in a state of darkness and chaos, yet it is not destitute of every spark and glimmering. The metaphysicians, those burning and shining lights, to our great advantage, are kindled up in various parts of our land; and to their praise be it spoken, they do not seem disposed to hide their candle under a bushel, but very generally set it up in the most conspicuous places, to lead the lonely and benighted traveler on his journey. I am not

[1] Trumbull MSS.

[2] Probably refers to Berkeley, whose "Alciphron" was written in New England.

[3] Trumbull MSS.

ignorant that some evil-minded persons will pretend that they deserve rather to be compared to an 'ignis fatuus,' or one of those vapory fires that appear by night in the meadows,—affirming that the cold marshes where the latter is generated, are a type of a metaphysician's brain; that each of them hath the faculty of shining only in the dark; and that they serve their followers alike, leading them into ponds and quagmires, from which they may thank their stars if they ever get out again. Much might be said in answer to these malicious insinuations; but as my time is too precious to be employed in such trifles, I desire the reader to get rid of the objection as well as he is able, and attend to certain points of far greater importance, which I am now preparing to discuss." [1]

In the course of the first seven numbers of "The Correspondent," the author had perhaps sufficiently diverted the public at the expense of his too pugnacious literary brethren; but it was not at all needful that he should now stay his hand, merely for lack of other objects worthy of his satirical attention. Accordingly, in the eighth number he turns toward an entirely different class of his fellow-citizens, —those noble-minded American philanthropists and Christians who were deriving large wealth from an active participation in the African slave-trade. This essay, which closed the series, is a fusillade of witty and stinging satire, and deserves attention in any study of anti-slavery opinion in America prior to the Declaration of Independence. [2]

[1] Trumbull MSS.

[2] This first series of "The Correspondent" appeared in "The Conn. Journal and New Haven Post-Boy," at the following dates:

No. 1, Feb. 23, 1770;
No. 2, March 2;
No. 3, March 9;
No. 4, March 23;
No. 5, April 6;
No. 6, April 27;
No. 7, June 1;
No. 8, July 6.

In ascertaining the dates of these essays, I have had the privilege of using the

VI.

From the task of writing this satire against the American traffic in African slaves, Trumbull must have turned to that of writing "An Essay on the Use and Advantages of the Fine Arts,"[1] a composition partly in prose and partly in verse, which he delivered at the commencement in New Haven on the 12th of September, 1770, on taking his master's degree. Giving to literature the highest place among the fine arts, he points to the unhappy neglect of them in America: "They are considered as matters of trifling amusement, and despised in comparison with the more solid branches of learning." Nevertheless, "they ennoble the soul, purify the passions, and give the thoughts a better turn. They add dignity to our sentiments, delicacy and refinement to our manners. They set us above our meaner pursuits, and make us scorn those low enjoyments, which perhaps we once esteemed as the perfection of human felicity. . . . These are the delights which humanize the soul, and polish away that rugged ferocity of manners, which is natural to the uncultivated nations of the world."[2]

But why bring forward a theme so untimely? In this crisis of desperate controversy, when Americans are contending for those primary rights without which the fine arts are but the diversions and gew-gaws of slaves, why interrupt serious business by so inopportune a plea? Nay, retorts our juvenile champion of æsthetic culture, in every land, in every age, these arts have most bloomed and flourished in conjunction with "the unconquered spirit of freedom" and with the ambition for "heroic deeds." "Learning and glory walk hand in hand through the world." "The same ardor of ambition, the same greatness of

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exceedingly rare file of "The Conn. Journal," in the possession of Miss Elizabeth Lyon Linsley, Elmwood, Stratford, Conn.

[1] New Haven, printed by T. & S. Green. The copy in my possession was Trumbull's, and has corrections in his handwriting.

[2] "An Essay," etc., 3–4.

thought, which inspires the warrior to brave danger in the conquering field, when diffused among a people will call forth genius in every station of life, fire the imagination of the artist, and raise to sublimity the aspiring muse." [1]

This, then, was the burden of the young poet's message to his fellow-countrymen, on that September day in 1770, while the air all about them was vibrant with the clangor of political debate, and trembling with whispered premonitions of some earth-shaking strife. And to justify his message, he then sketches the history of the fine arts, particularly of literature, in ancient and in modern times, closing it with a masterly outline of the great periods of English literature.

From this survey of literature in other times and among other peoples, he next turns to his own: "America hath a fair prospect in a few centuries of ruling both in arts and arms. It is universally allowed that we excel in the force of natural genius; and although but few among us are able to devote their whole lives to study, perhaps there is no nation in which a larger portion of learning is diffused through all ranks of the people." "The heroic love of liberty, the manly fortitude, the generosity of sentiment, for which we have been so justly celebrated, seem to promise the future advancement and established duration of our glory. Many incidents, unfortunate in themselves, have tended to call forth and sustain these virtues. Happy, in this respect, have been our late struggles for liberty! They have awakened the spirit of freedom; they have rectified the manners of the times; they have made us acquainted with the rights of mankind, recalled to our minds the glorious independence of former ages, fired us with the views of fame, and by filling our thoughts with contempt of the imported articles of luxury, have raised an opposition, not only to the illegal power, but to the effeminate manners of Britain." "This land hath already begun to distinguish itself in literature. . . . Our late writers in the cause

[1] "An Essay," etc., 5–6.

of liberty have gained the applause of Europe. Many elegant essays have been produced in the style of wit and humor; nor hath poetry been entirely uncultivated among us." Then, rising prophet-like into metrical utterance, he foretells the day when American poets shall

> " with lofty Milton vie ;
> Or wake from nature's themes the moral song,
> And shine with Pope, with Thomson, and with Young.
> This land her Steele and Addison shall view,
> The former glories equal'd by the new ;
> Some future Shakespeare charm the rising age,
> And hold in magic chains the list'ning stage ;
> Another Watts shall string the heav'nly lyre,
> And other muses other bards inspire." [1]

VII.

Soon after the occasion on which young Trumbull had thus pleaded the cause of the fine arts in America, and especially of good letters, he removed to Wethersfield, probably for the purpose of beginning the study of the law; but the impression which his own work as a man of letters had already made upon his readers is indicated by some lines of verse which, at about that time, greeted the publication of his commencement address:

> " All that for future times he bids us hope,
> We see in him, as England saw in Pope." [2]

After twelve months passed in Wethersfield, he was recalled to Yale College as a tutor, and entered upon his duties there in the autumn of 1771. There were but two other tutors in the college at that time, Joseph Howe and Timothy Dwight; and all three were agreed in enthusiasm for English literature, and in the purpose of giving a more modern and a more literary tone to the studies of the place.

[1] " An Essay," etc., 11–15.

[2] " Connecticut Journal," for Nov. 30, 1770.

In this employment, Trumbull continued for the next two years,—a period standing out in his life not only as the last one passed by him in academic retirement, but as in itself very fruitful in literary products which denote his diligent self-training as a scholar, as well as his struggle to keep alive some function for letters apart from, and above, that rage for political controversy that was then drawing all thoughts into its bitter service. His interest in philosophical studies during this period is seen in seven "Speculative Essays" on such subjects as "The Limits of Human Reason," "Our Idea of Infinity," and so forth.[1] As a writer of verse, the work he then did shows how carefully he was studying the models at that time most admired in English literature. Thus, in December, 1771, he wrote some twenty pentameter quatrains, "On the Vanity of Youthful Expectations: an Elegy,"[2] which is little else than a succession of echoes of Goldsmith and of Gray. In "The Owl and the Sparrow: a Fable,"[3] written in 1772, one traces the influence of John Gay and of Samuel Butler,—this being perhaps the earliest example of his use of that Hudibrastic verse which afterward became his favorite weapon as a satirist. To this period, also, belongs his "Ode to Sleep,"[4] written in 1773, a composition resonant of noble and sweet music, and making, if one may say so, a nearer approach to genuine poetry than had then been achieved by any American, excepting Freneau:

I.

"Come, gentle Sleep!
Balm of my wounds and softner of my woes,
And lull my weary heart in sweet repose,
And bid my sadden'd soul forget to weep,
And close the tearful eye;
While dewy eve with solemn sweep,
Hath drawn her fleecy mantle o'er the sky,

[1] Trumbull MSS.
[2] "Poetical Works," ed. 1820, ii. 165–168.
[3] Ibid. 149–154.
[4] Ibid. 113–120.

And chased afar, adown th' ethereal way,
The din of bustling care and gaudy eye of day.

II.

"Come, but thy leaden sceptre leave,
Thy opiate rod, thy poppies pale,
Dipp'd in the torpid fount of Lethe's stream,
That shroud with night each intellectual beam,
And quench th' immortal fire, in deep Oblivion's wave.
Yet draw the thick impervious veil
O'er all the scenes of tasted woe;
Command each cypress shade to flee;
Between this toil-worn world and me,
Display thy curtain broad, and hide the realms below.

III.

"Descend, and graceful in thy hand,
With thee bring thy magic wand,
And thy pencil, taught to glow
In all the hues of Iris' bow.
And call thy bright, aërial train,
Each fairy form and visionary shade,
That in the Elysian land of dreams,
The flower-enwoven banks along,
Or bowery maze that shades the purple streams,
Where gales of fragrance breathe th' enamor'd song,
In more than mortal charms array'd,
People the airy vales and revel in thy reign.

IV.

"But drive afar the haggard crew,
That haunt the guilt-encrimson'd bed,
Or dim before the frenzied view
Stalk with slow and sullen tread;
While furies with infernal glare,
Wave their pale torches through the troubled air;
And deep from Darkness' inmost womb,

Sad groans dispart the icy tomb,
And bid the sheeted spectre rise,
'Mid shrieks and fiery shapes and deadly fantasies.

V.

"Come and loose the mortal chain,
That binds to clogs of clay th' ethereal wing;
And give th' astonished soul to rove,
Where never sunbeam stretch'd its wide domain ·
And hail her kindred forms above,
In fields of uncreated spring,
Aloft where realms of endless glory rise,
And rapture paints in gold the landscape of the skies.

VI.

"Then through the liquid fields we 'll climb,
Where Plato treads empyreal air,
Where daring Homer sits sublime,
And Pindar rolls his fiery car;
Above the cloud-encircled hills,
Where high Parnassus lifts his airy head,
And Helicon's melodious rills
Flow gently through the warbling glade;
And all the Nine, in deathless choir combined,
Dissolve in harmony th' enraptured mind,
And every bard, that tuned th' immortal lay,
Basks in th' ethereal blaze, and drinks celestial day."

Surely, the poetic apprentice who was capable of such work as this, was not far from Apollo's kingdom.

VIII.

Trumbull's continued fondness for Steele and Addison is shown by his activity, during the second year of his tutorship at Yale, in the writing of many prose essays after their sprightly manner, on current topics in society, letters, and

politics. For these new essays, he revived the old title of "The Correspondent," which he had already made so popular; and counting the later series as a mere continuation of the earlier one, he kept up the publication in "The Connecticut Journal and New Haven Post-Boy," from the 12th of February, 1773, to the 3d of the following September. About three-fourths of the entire number were written by himself, the remainder by his literary friends.[1] As may be imagined, much inequality of merit is noticeable in these essays; but the hand of Trumbull is easily traced in the 11th number, which contains a ludicrous burlesque on the prevailing New England fashion as to obituary notices; in the 18th and 19th numbers, which satirize medical quackery as then and there practised; in the 21st number, which deals caustically with common beggary and its proper treatment; in the 33d number, which gives to the public a sad warning of the approaching demise of their benefactor and friend, "The Correspondent"; in the 37th number, which duly chronicles that melancholy event; and, finally, in the 38th number, which closes the series with the last will and testament of the deceased, and a full recantation of every opinion hitherto expressed by him which had given the slightest disturbance to anybody's mental repose.[2]

IX.

The most remarkable fact respecting this period of Trumbull's residence at Yale College is that he seems then to have

[1] His own statement. MSS.

[2] This second series of "The Correspondent" appeared in "The Conn. Journal and New Haven Post-Boy" at the following dates, for the opportunity of tracing which I was also indebted to the courtesy of Miss Linsley, of Stratford: No. 9, Feb. 12, 1773; No. 10, Feb. 19; No. 11, Feb. 26; No. 12, March 5; No. 13, March 12; No. 14, March 19; No. 15, March 26; No. 16, April 2; No. 17, April 9; No. 18, April 16; No. 19, April 23; No. 20, April 30; No. 21, May 7; No. 22, May 14; No. 23, May 21; No. 24, May 28; No. 25, June 4; No. 26, June 11; No. 27, June 18; No. 28, June 25; No. 29, July 2; No. 30, July 9; No. 31, July 16; No. 32, July 23; No. 33, July 30; No. 34, Aug. 6; No. 35, Aug. 13; No. 36, Aug. 20; No. 37, Aug. 27; No. 38, Sep. 3.

found out his final place and function in letters,—that of satirist. Long afterward, he expressed the opinion that his vocation to satire was but the accident of circumstances. "Formed," said he, "with the keenest sensibility and the most extravagantly romantic feelings, . . . I was born the dupe of imagination. My satirical turn was not native. It was produced by the keen spirit of critical observation, operating on disappointed expectation, and avenging itself on real or fancied wrongs."[1] Whether or not this account of the matter be anything more than an old man's conjecture operating on a supposed reminiscence, it is plain that Trumbull's satirical turn did manifest itself very early in his life, in the midst of the gayety of his undergraduate days, and before he could have known much of disappointed expectation, or of the sombre passion for avenging himself either on real or on fancied wrongs. In actual result, too, his satire ranged over almost every form,—playful, delicate, broad, coarse, ludicrous, severe, scathing, savage, pitiless.[2] Finally, his satirical turn was cultivated not only by abundant exercise, in prose and in verse, on every sort of subject, but by an intense and critical study of the great masters of satire, particularly in English, French, and Latin.

His first deliberate and elaborate publication as a satirist in verse, was "The Progress of Dullness,"[3] consisting of three separate poems under that single title. Of this satirical trilogy, the first part, "On the Adventures of Tom Brainless," was written during the first year of his tutorship, and was evidently begotten of sundry observations made by him under the advantages of that position. It is simply a satire on collegiate education as then practised in New England—its shams, incongruities, stupidities—especially as to the qualifications required for the sacred ministry.

In a New England farm-house, Farmer Brainless is talking with his wife concerning the future of their son Tom, who is really a drone and a dunce. The conclusion of the

[1] Trumbull MSS. [2] Many examples of these are among his MSS.
[3] "Poetical Works," ii. 7–90.

whole matter is this: Tom shall not follow his father in that hard vocation—a long anguish in plucking subsistence from a rocky and barren soil. No, he shall go to college; he shall seize hold of life by a pleasanter handle; he shall have a profession. First of all, then, Tom must be fitted for college:

> "So to the priest in form he goes,
> Prepared to study or to doze."

After two years thus spent in sham preparation, dieting "on husks of Lily," murdering Vergil, turning Tully into farce, and gaining just skill enough to blunder through a chapter of the Greek Testament, Tom goes to college, where he passes triumphantly a sham examination, and settles down within its learned walls to four years of sham study. Very soon he is seized by "the college-evil," to wit, indisposition—an indisposition to do any manner of work—a mysterious delicacy of health which is offended by all labor in the preparation of lessons, or in attendance upon lectures:

> "Then every book which ought to please,
> Stirs up the seeds of dire disease;
> Greek spoils his eyes, the print 's so fine,
> Grown dim with study, or with wine;
> Of Tully's Latin much afraid,
> Each page he calls the doctor's aid;
> While geometry, with lines so crooked,
> Sprains all his wits to overlook it.
> His sickness puts on every name,
> Its cause and uses still the same,—
> 'T is tooth-ache, colic, gout, or stone,
> With phases various as the moon;
> But though through all the body spread,
> Still makes its cap'tal seat, the head.
> In all diseases, 't is expected,
> The weakest parts be most infected.
> Kind Head-Ache, hail! thou blest disease,

The friend of idleness and ease ;
Who, mid the still and dreary bound
Where college walls her sons surround,
In spite of fears, in justice' spite,
Assum'st o'er laws dispensing right,
Set'st from his task the blunderer free,
Excused by dullness and by thee.
Thy vot'ries bid a bold defiance
To all the calls and threats of science,
Slight learning, human and divine,
And hear no prayers, and fear no fine." [1]

Such are the achievements of drones and of dunces at Yale ! But as to those who are neither dunces nor drones ? Ah, surely, true scholars do exist there, and they perform most famous work, with their dead and deadening erudition ! These be the mighty book-worms who

" Despising such low things the while,
As English grammar, phrase, and style,
Despising every nicer art
That aids the tongue or mends the heart,
Read ancient authors o'er in vain,
Nor taste one beauty they contain,
. . . . . .
And plodding on in one dull tone,
Gain ancient tongues and lose their own." [2]

With a like audacity does this irrepressible young reformer then proceed to hold up to derision other outworn notions and methods of education then prevailing in the college of which he is tutor,—the preposterous ways, for example, in which they there teach logic, rhetoric, mathematics, and metaphysics. Returning from his irreverent raid into the field of collegiate reform, the satirist resumes the history of his typical dunce, Tom Brainless:

[1] " Poetical Works," ii. 15–16. [2] Ibid. 17.

"Four years at college dozed away
In sleep and slothfulness and play,
Too dull for vice, with clearest conscience,
Charged with no fault but that of nonsense,
(And nonsense long, with serious air,
Has wandered unmolested there,)
He passes trial, fair and free,
And takes in form his first degree." [1]

Armed with his diploma, Tom now goes forth to prey upon a much-enduring world. First, that he may put immediate money into his purse, he begins his career by taking a school, where,

. . . "throned aloft in elbow chair,
With solemn face and awful air,
He tries with ease and unconcern,
To teach what ne'er himself could learn;
. . . . . .
Holds all good learning must depend
Upon his rod's extremest end,
Whose great electric virtue 's such,
Each genius brightens at the touch;
. . . . . .
Thinks flogging cures all mortal ills,
And breaks their heads to break their wills." [2]

At the end of a year, Tom gives up the school, and enters upon his professional studies. In the house of a famous minister, he undertakes to learn the art of preaching; he

. . . "settles down with earnest zeal
Sermons to study, and to steal;
. . . . . .
Learns with nice art, to make with ease
The Scriptures speak whate'er he please;
With judgment, unperceived to quote
What Poole explained, or Henry wrote;

[1] "Poetical Works," 23–24. [2] Ibid. 26.

To give the gospel new editions,
Split doctrines into propositions,
Draw motives, uses, inferences,
And torture words in thousand senses;
Learn the grave style and goodly phrase,
Safe handed down from Cromwell's days,
And shun, with anxious care, the while,
The infection of a modern style."

At length, Tom stalks abroad a grave divine, having received a license to preach;—for

. . . "though his skull be cudgel-proof,
He 's orthodox, and that 's enough."

Next follows a period during which this would-be heaven-expounder roves and raves as a candidate:

"Now in the desk, with solemn air,
Our hero makes his audience stare;
Asserts with all dogmatic boldness,
Where impudence is yoked to dullness;
. . . . . .
Two hours his drawling speech holds on,
And names it preaching when he 's done."

At last established for life in a town which is sufficiently described by saying that its mental condition was happily suited to his own, he

. . . "deals in preaching and in prayer,
And starves on sixty pounds a year;
And culls his texts, and tills his farm,
Does little good, and little harm;
On Sunday, in his best array,
Deals forth the dullness of the day;
And while above he spends his breath,
The yawning audience nod beneath."

The first part of "The Progress of Dullness"[1] was published at New Haven, probably in August, 1772. This was followed, in January, 1773, by the second part,—"On the Life and Character of Dick Hairbrain,"[2]—an effective delineation of the career of a rich and vulgar New England fop of the period, from his pampered boyhood, his unstudious and ruffianly years in college, and the sensual frivolities of his foreign tour, onward to that terribly accelerated stage of existence, when, for him,

"Lone age with hasty step comes on,"

and when, elbowed aside by younger fops, the palsied dandy

"sinks forlorn—
Of all, and even himself, the scorn."

This powerful satire was followed in July, 1773, by the third part of the trilogy,—"On the Adventures of Miss Harriet Simper,"[3]—a satire on the wrong and the folly of excluding women from the higher education,—portraying the world of shallow thought, of frivolous occupation, of blighting disappointment, to which women in fashionable life are doomed, if without the dignity and the consolations conferred by intellectual pursuits.

No wonder that a notable stir was made by these three satires, so fresh and ruddy with the tints of real life, so fearless in their local tone and color, so pungent with contemporary and local criticism, and coming as they did in so rapid succession from the academic solitude of that portentous young tutor. They seemed to announce the arrival of a rather uncomfortable inhabitant,—a satirist from whose glance no folly or obliquity would be likely to hide itself. And even yet, and for us, the whole work has a masterful aspect. Though far less subtle than his later and greater satire, "M'Fingal," it deals with subjects more universal and more permanent. Moreover, like all of Trumbull's work, it shows the training of the scholar, the technical

[1] "Poetical Works," ii. 27–33. [2] Ibid. 35–57. [3] Ibid. 59–90.

precision of the literary artist. Each poem has a unity of its own, and holds up to laughter the despicable or the detestable traits of a single type of character. To all three poems an artistic unity is given, by a correlation, not only of topics, but of incidents, the latter of which just sufficiently entangle their chief personages at the end. Here, also, one finds ample facility and variety of literary allusion, unblinking observation of the follies and vices of society, an eye for every sort of personal foible, a quick sense of the ludicrous, a sure command of the vocabulary of ridicule and invective. Then, too, the genuine power of these satires was shown by evidence that could not be contradicted,—the outcry of punctured vanity with which they were greeted,—an outcry so vociferous, so sibilant, from so many quarters, as to prove how well each arrow had found its mark. Finally, the author then began to let the public know something of his remarkable gift for epigram in verse—for those neat forth-puttings of shrewd humor which have carried so many of Trumbull's lines far out into the current of popular proverbs. Then it was that people began to pass from one to another some sayings of his, which, though they soon forgot the fact, they had gathered from the pages of "The Progress of Dullness," such as this—

"For metaphysics, rightly shown,
But teach how little can be known"[1];

or this—

"Whoe'er at college points his sneer,
Proves that himself learn'd nothing there"[2];

or this—

"First from the dust our sex began,
But woman was refined from man"[3];

or this—

"For weighty works men show most sloth in,
But labor hard at doing nothing"[4];

or this—

"Good sense, like fruits, is rais'd by toil.
But follies sprout in every soil."[5]

[1] "Poetical Works," ii. 22. [2] Ibid. 52. [3] Ibid. 65. [4] Ibid. 69. [5] Ibid. 70.

CHAPTER X.

THE REKINDLING OF THE GREAT DISPUTE: 1766–1769.

I.—The study of American political writings resumed—Happiness of the colonies over the repeal of the Stamp Act in the Spring of 1766.

II.—Commencement exercises at the College of Philadelphia, 20 May, 1766—The prize by John Sargent for the best essay on "A Perpetual Union between Great Britain and her American Colonies"—Provost Smith's congratulations on the news of repeal received the day before—Publication of the four essays written for the Sargent prize—Their political note—Francis Hopkinson's avowal of American identity with England.

III.—American political confidence disturbed by the Declaratory Act—Political anxiety as uttered in "Virginia Hearts of Oak," May, 1766.

IV.—A great stride in American theories as to the legislative authority of parliament—The new doctrine as set forth by Richard Bland, in his "Enquiry into the Rights of the British Colonies," 1766—Jefferson's praise of this pamphlet.

V.—American distrust greatly increased by the proceedings of parliament in 1767 under the lead of Charles Townshend—His three measures reviving the American controversy—Their effects in America as described by Lecky—Great stimulus thus given to American political literature—Traits of this literature.

VI.—The supreme significance of John Dickinson's "Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania," December, 1767, to February, 1768—Purpose and method of these essays—Their unrivaled success in America and Europe—The renown thus won by Dickinson—His enormous popularity.

VII.—The arrival of the customs commissioners at Boston—They are driven by the populace to take refuge on an island in the harbor, June, 1768—British troops summoned from Halifax to quell American resistance—Dickinson's "Liberty Song," in response to these proceedings, July, 1768.

VIII.—The gravity of the situation as revealed in other writings of this year—Speech at the dedication of a Tree of Liberty at Providence—A New York pamphlet entitled "The Power and Grandeur of Great Britain founded on the Liberty of the Colonies"—The political tension prolonged into the year 1769—"Liberty, a Poem lately Found in a Bundle of Papers said to be Written by a Hermit in New Jersey."

IX.—American writers then resident abroad—Their sympathy with their countrymen at home—Arthur Lee—His chief political writings.

I.

THE interval of rest from the strife of political tongues, which the repeal of the Stamp Act brought to the Americans in the spring of 1766, has thus been used by us for the purpose of forming some acquaintance with the several groups of non-political writings which belong to the first decade of the Revolutionary period, and which may give us a clew as to the course which American literature would have taken during the latter half of the eighteenth century, had not its method and tone, as well as its topics, been roughly turned aside by the inrushing flood of Revolutionary passion. It is now time for us to come back to those political writings which, if not the most delightful, were at least the most characteristic, expression of the thought and life of the period we are dealing with, and which, after this brief lull in the storm of controversy, once more spoke out with accents of wounded affection, of alarm, of remonstrance, finally of wrath, and scorn, and defiance.

We should find it hard to overstate the happiness which, for a few weeks, filled the hearts of the American people at the news that the detested Stamp Act had been repealed. As, in 1765, through the bond of a common fear, the thirteen colonies had been brought for the first time into some sort of union, so in 1766, that union was for a while prolonged through the bond of a common joy. Certainly, never before had all these American communities been so swept by one mighty wave of grateful enthusiasm and delight. As the news passed up and down the land, business was suspended, bells were set a ringing, bonfires were lighted, the imperial colors were unfurled; and thus, with processions, and banquets, and barbecues, and even with more sedate assemblages crowding their places of worship, they gave themselves up for a time to their own spontaneous manifestations of pleasure at having been delivered from a humiliating political stigma, from an appalling political peril. Statues were voted to the king and to the great

commoner; and to them, as well as to the ministry, and to Barré, and Conway, and Lord Camden, were sent addresses all aglow with loyalty and love.

"The repeal of the Stamp Act," wrote an American politician,[1] in his diary for the third of November, 1766, "has hushed into silence almost every popular clamor, and composed every wave of popular disorder into a smooth and peaceful calm." "I am bold to say," declared Edmund Burke,[2] "that so sudden a calm, recovered after so violent a storm, is without a parallel in history."

II.

The true note of this universal joy may still be heard by us as then uttered in its most refined and most discriminating form, at an academic festival, the commencement exercises of the College of Philadelphia, on the 20th of May, 1766,—which happened to be only one day after the confirmation there of the news of the repeal of the Stamp Act. Some months before, a noble-minded Englishman, a member of parliament, John Sargent of London, being desirous of helping to check the growth of discord between the two great branches of the English race, had offered a gold medal to be given to any graduate or undergraduate of the college, for the best essay on "The Reciprocal Advantages of a Perpetual Union between Great Britain and her American Colonies." Near the close of his address bestowing this medal and saying the usual farewell words to the young graduates, the provost of the college, William Smith, paused for an instant, and then added: "And here I ought to conclude—but the joyous occasion calls me to return particular thanks to this splendid audience for the countenance they have given us this day, and to congratulate them on the glorious and happy turn in the affairs of America, whereof yesterday gave us the certain and confirmed accounts. When I look back on the dreadful state of suspense, in which these colonies have been so long

[1] John Adams, "Works," ii. 203.

[2] Burke, "Works," ii. 61.

agitated; when, in the room of foreboding doubt and painful solicitude, I behold joy in every look, the clouds dispersed, the sun breaking in upon us again, and an assembly around me, in which every man rejoices to salute his neighbor as free, I feel,—I feel, a sympathy unutterable, and an exultation of soul never felt before. O glorious day! O happy America! if now we but know how to prize our happiness! The unguarded sallies of intemperate zeal will soon be forgotten; but the steadfast, the noble, the patriotic efforts of cool and good men, in the vindication of native and constitutional rights, will more and more claim the regard of all the free, in every clime and age, and perhaps be consecrated by time into one of the brightest transactions of our story; asserting our pedigree and showing that we were worthy of having descended from the illustrious stock of Britons." [1]

So perfectly did the theme of the prize-essay suit the feeling of the time, that, along with the three other essays which had been written on the same subject, it was immediately published both in Philadelphia and in London.[2] These four papers on behalf of the perpetual unity of the English-speaking race, furnish to us now a striking exhibition of the most cultivated American thought and sentiment at that moment,—a firm resolve for civil rights, this resolve being blended with passionate love for the mother country and with pride and happiness in the fact of American membership of the British empire. "Were it possible," wrote one of these essayists, "for Great Britain, with an high and arbitrary hand, to think of snatching from her colonies the essential privileges of Englishmen, . . . it would be to dress her slaves in livery, and deck America in robes of paper, to make her the contempt and derision of every other nation." "But why should the mutual connection between the parent country and her colonies ever come into

[1] "Four Dissertations," etc., 9–10.

[2] "Four Dissertations on the Reciprocal Advantages of a Perpetual Union between Great Britain and her American Colonies."

question? Are we not one nation and one people? And do we not own obedience to one common king? . . . We of America are in all respects Englishmen, notwithstanding that the Atlantic rolls her waves between us and the throne to which we all own allegiance. Nor can we, though in ever so flourishing a state, throw off our dependence, or dissolve this union, without breaking the very bonds of nature." "How detestable, then, must the politician be, who shall ever attempt to kindle the destructive flames of jealousy between two friends, whom nature seems to have united in the closest bonds, and whose hearts and interests are and ever ought to be one! Should any one ever succeed in this (which God forbid) I doubt not but that, after much cruel contention and unnatural bloodshed, each would rush into the other's arms, and emphatically cry out—'We are both in the wrong!'"[1]

III.

Nevertheless, through all the exclamations of joy with which, in the spring and early summer of 1766, the Americans everywhere welcomed the news of the repeal of the Stamp Act, one may still detect a note of disquietude. As so often before and since, the British government had then chosen to do a gracious act in an ungracious way. The repeal of the law had been accompanied by what seemed to the Americans to be a lurking menace,—namely, the declaration that parliament had the right "to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever." This declaration—which, indeed, merely expressed a sound constitutional principle in a form needlessly harsh—had the effect which was afterward well described by Lord Shelburne when, in a letter to Pitt, he said that it had kept alive "an unfortunate jealousy and distrust of the English government throughout the colonies."[2] Accordingly, before many months the joy of the gratified colonists began to die away into a gloomy suspicion that the government had then drawn back its arm

[1] "Four Dissertations," etc., 108, 109, 111–112. These sentences are from the dissertation by Francis Hopkinson.

[2] Quoted in Bryant and Gay, "A Popular History of the U. S.," iii. 351.

from smiting them, only to gain the opportunity for giving them a more stunning blow. It was a most distressing doubt. To one who now reads the writings of that period, nothing is plainer than that the colonists then loved England, not only sincerely but passionately,—giving to her, in fact, an inordinate and a thoroughly provincial reverence. It was, therefore, a terrible pang which they experienced in this unrevoked need of distrusting her; and the deep solicitude of all that time during which even exultation had to keep room for suspicion, is vividly interpreted for us in an anonymous political song that then rose from the loyal but troubled heart of Virginia. This crude lyric was entitled "Virginia Hearts of Oak"; and it is of special interest to us now, not only for its own sake, but as being, perhaps, the first of a considerable series of political and military songs written during the Revolution after the same model,—that model being David Garrick's famous sailor-song called "Hearts of Oak,"—a song of British freedom, of British pluck, and especially of the pride of Britain in her sailors and in her sovereignty of the sea. At least two stanzas of Garrick's song we must here recall, as being quite necessary to the appreciation of this and every subsequent American echo of it:

"Come, cheer up, my lads! 't is to glory we steer,
To add something more to this wonderful year:
To honor we call you, not press you like slaves,
For who are so free as the sons of the waves?
Hearts of oak are our ships,
Gallant tars are our men,
We always are ready;
Steady, boys, steady!"

"Britannia triumphant, her ships sweep the sea;
Her standard is Justice,—her watchword, 'Be Free!'
Then cheer up, my lads! with one heart let us sing,
'Our soldiers, our sailors, our statesmen, our king.'
Hearts of oak," etc. [1]

[1] The whole song is given by James T. Fields and Edwin P. Whipple, in their "Family Library of British Poetry," 388.

Remembering the troubled mood which still lingered in the hearts of the Americans through all their joy over the several steps in the progress of the repeal of the Stamp Act, and how, even then, beneath all other purposes, was their purpose to obey their English instincts which disdained cowardice even toward England, and which disdained to be enslaved even by England, we shall not fail to notice how perfectly, with what neat implications, all this complexity and tumult of emotion finds itself uttered in the "Virginia Hearts of Oak," wherein, indeed, the sturdy sentiment of Garrick's song is simply transplanted and Americanized, and its very nobility of enthusiasm for courage, for freedom, for patriotism, is turned, like a captured battery, against any and all aggressions on the part of the British ministry:

"Sure never was picture drawn more to the life,
Or affectionate husband more fond of his wife,
Than America copies and loves Britain's sons,
Who, conscious of freedom, are bold as great guns.
Hearts of oak are we still;
For we 're sons of those men
Who always are ready—
Steady, boys, steady—
To fight for their freedom again and again.

"Though we feast and grow fat on America's soil,
Yet we own ourselves subjects of Britain's fair isle;
And who 's so absurd to deny us the name?—
Since true British blood flows in every vein.
Hearts of oak, etc.

"Then cheer up, my lads, to your country be firm!
Like kings of the ocean, we 'll weather each storm:
Integrity calls out, fair Liberty, see,
Waves her flag o'er our heads, and her words are—'Be Free!'
Hearts of oak, etc.

"To King George, as true subjects, we loyal bow down,
But hope we may call Magna Charta our own:
Let the rest of the world slavish worship decree,
Great Britain has ordered her sons to be 'Free'!
Hearts of oak, etc.

. . . . . .

"On our brow while we laurel-crowned liberty wear,
What Englishmen ought, we Americans dare:
Though tempests and terrors around us we see,
Bribes nor fears can prevail o'er the hearts that are 'Free.'
Hearts of oak, etc.

"With Loyalty, Liberty let us entwine,
Our blood shall for both flow as free as our wine;
Let us set an example what all men should be,
And a toast give the world,—'Here 's to those who 'd be 'Free.'
Hearts of oak, etc."[1]

IV.

Moreover, how immense was the stride which political suspicion then prompted some of the colonial leaders to take in the development of opinion touching the authority of the general government, may be seen in the fact that in this very year of pacification was first promulgated the startling doctrine that the British colonies in America were united to the empire only through the British crown, and not at all through the British parliament, and that to the acts of the latter they owed no more obedience than did the king's dominion of Hanover. Although not many Americans were then ready for this prodigious innovation in constitutional doctrine, yet as a working theory, first, for the preservation of the union with Great Britain, and, afterward, as it proved, for the dissolution of that union, it seems to have occurred almost at the same time to three different chiefs of American opposition, and in three widely

[1] This ballad was first printed in the "Virginia Gazette" for May 2, 1766. It contains seven stanzas, and is given in full in Duyckinck, "Cyclopædia of American Literature," i. 451. In that copy, the toast given in the last line reads: "Here 's to those dare be free."

separated places,—to Joseph Hawley in Massachusetts,[1] to Benjamin Franklin in London,[2] and to Richard Bland in Virginia.

From the aspect of immediate publicity as well as of elaborateness of presentation, special notice may be claimed for the plea then put forward by the last of these three politicians,—a man of substance and renown in his own colony, who for his supposed learning in Anglo-American history was then styled "the Antiquary." It was in his pamphlet bearing the title of "An Enquiry into the Rights of the British Colonies," first published in 1766, that Richard Bland boldly announced the proposition that, though a part of the British empire, "America was no part of the kingdom of England," and that, having been "settled by Englishmen at their own expense, under particular stipulations with the crown,"[3] it was under no obligation to receive laws from the parliament. It was to the crown alone that the colonies owed their existence; it was to the crown alone that they owed allegiance.

The surname of this writer by no means describes his style, which, besides being somewhat jerky and harsh, is tinged by the acerbity of a high-spirited man keeping angry vigil over those enemies of his country who, as he thought, were trying "to fix shackles upon the American colonies—shackles which, however nicely polished, can by no means sit easy upon men who have just sentiments of their own rights and liberties."[4] Forty-nine years after the publication of this brochure, it received from Jefferson the extravagant praise of being "the first pamphlet on the nature of the connection with Great Britain which had any pretension to accuracy of view on that subject."[5] It is evident that by "accuracy of view" Jefferson meant, as usual, conformity to his own view. Without doubt, Bland's pamphlet is

[1] W. M. Sloane, "The French War and the Revolution," 147.
[2] "Works of Franklin," Bigelow ed., iii. 483, 485, 490–491.
[3] "An Enquiry," etc., 16.
[4] Ibid. 5.
[5] "Writings of Jefferson," H. A. Washington ed., vi. 485.

both acute and ingenious; but accurate it is not, even as to the facts of history, and probably not as to the principles of constitutional law. Finally, the argument is lacking both in unity and in consistency; and, in the case of well-read persons, it could hardly have been convincing except to those who were convinced already or were already determined to be.[1]

V.

The returning political distrust which in America soon mastered and silenced the "jocund strains" of the year 1766, was constantly nourished and inflamed by the tidings which kept coming from England during the year 1767; as that, so early as in January, Charles Townshend, chancellor of the exchequer, had openly avowed in the house of commons his purpose, through some form of taxation, to procure from America a revenue sufficient to support a military establishment there[2]; and that, a few months later, and at a time "when Chatham was completely incapacitated, and when all other statesmen had sunk before the ascendency of Townshend,"[3] this brilliant but reckless leader had carried through parliament three drastic measures admirably contrived, as Pownall then said of one of them, to be "the beginning of a series of mischiefs."[4] These three measures were, first, the famous act for laying a port-duty in America on several prominent articles of Anglo-American commerce, to-wit, glass, red lead, white lead, paper, paint, and tea[5]; secondly, "an act to enable his majesty to put the customs and other duties in the British dominions in America, and the execution of the laws relating to trade there, under the management of commissioners to be appointed for that pur-

[1] Other writings by Bland are "A Fragment of the Pistole Fee Claimed by the Governor of Virginia," 1753, edited from the original manuscript by W. C. Ford, and published in 1891; also, "A Letter to the Clergy of Virginia," 1760.

[2] Lecky, "A History of England," iv. 107. [3] Ibid. 109.

[4] Hansard, "The Parliamentary History of England," xvi. 341.

[5] "The Statutes at Large," 7 Geo. iii. c. 46, 56.

pose, and to be resident in the said dominions"[1]; and, thirdly, the act suspending the functions of the legislature of New York until it should be ready to provide British troops stationed there, not only with suitable quarters, but with "fire, candles, vinegar, and salt, bedding, utensils for dressing victuals, and small beer, cider, or rum."[2]

If, as Lord Chatham then facetiously said of the Americans, "the Stamp Act of most unhappy memory" had "frightened those irritable and umbrageous people quite out of their senses,"[3] it should not have required supernatural gifts for the king and his ministers to foresee that these new acts of parliamentary aggression were likely to produce in America even more serious effects—for a description of which we may safely depend upon the great English historian who in our time has so fairly reviewed the several stages of the American Revolution. "A period of wild and feverish confusion followed. Counsels of the most violent kind were freely circulated, and for a time it seemed as if the appointment of the new board of commissioners would be resisted by force; but Otis and some of the other popular leaders held back from the conflict, and in several colonies a clear sense of the serious nature of the struggle that was impending exercised a sobering influence. Georgia, which had been inclined to follow the example of New York, was brought to reason by the prospect of being left without the protection of English troops in the midst of the negroes and the Indians. The central and southern colonies hesitated for some time to follow the lead of New England. Hutchinson wrote to the government at home that Boston would probably find no other town to follow her in her career of violence; and DeKalb, the secret agent of Choiseul, who was busily employed in fomenting rebellion in the colonies, appears for a time to have thought it would all end in words, and that England, by keeping her taxes with-

[1] "The Statutes at Large," 7 Geo. iii. c. 46, 56.

[2] Ibid. c. 59; also 5 Geo. iii. c. 33.

[3] "The Correspondence of William Pitt," etc., iii. 193.

in very moderate limits, would maintain her authority. Massachusetts, however, had thrown herself with fierce energy into the conflict, and she soon carried the other provinces in her wake. Non-importation agreements, binding all the inhabitants to abstain from English manufactures, and especially from every article on which duties were levied in England, spread from colony to colony, and the assembly of Massachusetts issued a circular addressed to all the other colonial assemblies denouncing the new laws as unconstitutional, and inviting the different assemblies to take united measures for their repeal. The assembly at the same time drew up a petition to the king and addresses to the leading English supporters of the American cause. These addresses, which were intended to act upon English opinion, were composed with great ability and moderation; and while expressing the firm resolution of the Americans to resist every attempt at parliamentary taxation, they acknowledged fully the general legislative authority of parliament, and disclaimed in the strongest language any wish for Independence." [1]

The quick and ever-deepening excitement thus created in America through the abrupt abandonment by the British government in 1767 of the statesmanlike colonial policy it had proclaimed only twelve months before, found a most vivid expression in the prodigious crop of political writings, in prose and verse, which then came into life under such stimulus. Thenceforward, for at least eight years, the colonial printing-presses had to toil hard in order to deliver to the public the pamphlets, broadsides, handbills, and other fugitive productions which dealt with the terrible problem once more thrust upon the country, some of them doing so, no doubt, in language almost profligate in its violence. Even now the reader who has access to so rare and precious a souvenir of those times as a file of American newspapers for any portion of the period between the years 1767 and 1775, may almost feel for himself the thrill of that

[1] Lecky, "A History of England," iv. 113–114.

fiery passion—noble and ignoble—which seems yet to throb and burn along the dingy pages of these old journals,—astonishment, wounded affection, grief, anger, resentment, disdain, defiance, with here and there, also, the demagogue's mean joy in popular disquiet, and the demagogue's lust for notoriety and profit to be got by him out of the general breaking up of the ancient bonds of popular faith and order. "It is mournful to notice," says the English critic from whom we have just quoted, "how the field of controversy had widened and deepened, and how a quarrel which might at one time have been appeased by slight mutual concessions, was leading inevitably to the disruption of the empire." [1]

VI.

Among all the political writings which were the immediate offspring of this baleful revival of a dispute that had been so recently and so well set at rest, there stand out, as of the highest significance, certain essays which began to make their appearance in a Philadelphia newspaper in the latter part of the year 1767. These essays very soon became celebrated, on both sides of the Atlantic, under the short title of the "Farmer's Letters." Their full title was "Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies." Though published without the author's name, they were instantly recognized as the work of John Dickinson; and their appearance may perhaps fairly be described as constituting, upon the whole, the most brilliant event in the literary history of the Revolution.

One distinction attaching to them is that they were written by a man who shared in the general excitement over the new attack upon colonial rights, but who desired to compose it rather than to increase it, and especially to persuade his countrymen so to bear their part in the new dispute as to save their rights as men, without losing their happiness as British subjects. However it may have been

[1] Lecky, "A History of England," iv. 111.

with some other American writers of that period, here was no reckless declaimer, no frantic political adventurer, precipitating public confusion because he had nothing to lose by public confusion, and eager to run American society upon the breakers in the hope of gathering spoils from the common wreck. On the contrary, here was a man of powerful and cultivated intellect, with all his interests and all his tastes on the side of order, conservatism, and peace, if only with these could be had political safety and honor.

The dreadful import of the three chief measures of the British government in 1767 touching the American colonies, no man saw more clearly, or felt more acutely, than did John Dickinson; and under the guise of a plain Anglo-American farmer of patriotic instincts, and with solid possessions at stake, he proceeded to deal with this new problem in such a manner as to help both Americans and Englishmen to solve it before they should rush any nearer to the abyss which he saw yawning between them. By a graceful bit of self-description, he cleverly puts himself, at the outset, into sympathy with his readers, and then proceeds to take up for consideration the recent acts of parliament, trying to show both their incompatibility with the principles of the British constitution, and their fatal bearing upon the liberties of America and the well-being of the whole empire. His chief object, he declares, is "to convince the people of these colonies, that they are, at this moment, exposed to the most imminent dangers; and to persuade them, immediately, vigorously, and unanimously, to exert themselves, in the most firm but most peaceable manner, for obtaining relief." [1] The cause of liberty, he tells them, "is a cause of too much dignity, to be sullied by turbulence and tumult. It ought to be maintained in a manner suitable to her nature. Those who engage in it should breathe a sedate yet fervent spirit, animating them to actions of prudence, justice, modesty, bravery, humanity, and magnanimity." [2]

[1] "The Political Writings of John Dickinson," ed. of 1801, i. 167.

[2] Ibid. 168.

He expresses a hope that they and their "posterity, to the latest ages," may be guided by such a spirit "that it will be impossible to determine whether an American's character is most distinguishable for his loyalty to his sovereign, his duty to his mother country, his love of freedom, or his affection for his native soil."[1] "Let us behave like dutiful children, who have received unmerited blows from a beloved parent. Let us complain to our parent; but let our complaints speak at the same time the language of affection and veneration."[2] He protests against any thought of Independence as of a fatal calamity.[3] Nevertheless, "let these truths be indelibly impressed on our minds: that we cannot be happy, without being free; that we cannot be free, without being secure in our property; that we cannot be secure in our property, if, without our consent, others may, as by right, take it away; that taxes imposed on us by parliament, do thus take it away."[4] "Let us take care of our rights, and we therein take care of our prosperity. 'Slavery is ever preceded by sleep.' Individuals may be dependent on ministers, if they please: states should scorn it."[5] "Americans have that true magnanimity of soul, that can resent injuries, without falling into rage."[6] "Though your devotion to Great Britain is the most affectionate, yet you can make proper distinctions; and know what you owe to yourselves, as well as to her."[7]

No other serious political essays of the Revolutionary era quite equaled the "Farmer's Letters" in literary merit, including in that term the merit of substance as well as of form; and, excepting the political essays of Thomas Paine, which did not begin to appear until nine years later, none equaled the "Farmer's Letters" in immediate celebrity, and in direct power upon events. As they first came forth, from week to week, in the Philadelphia newspaper that originally published them, they were welcomed by the

[1] "The Political Writings of John Dickinson," ed. of 1801, i. 169.
[2] Ibid. 173. [3] Ibid. 171. [4] Ibid. 275.
[5] Ibid. 277. [6] Ibid. 282. [7] Ibid. 282–283.

delighted interest and sympathy of multitudes of readers in that neighborhood, and were instantly reproduced in all the twenty-five newspapers then published in America, with but four known exceptions.[1] Within less than four weeks after the last letter had made its appearance, they were all collected and issued as a pamphlet, of which at least eight editions were published in different parts of America.[2] In the very year in which the pamphlet was first published in America, two editions of it were published in London, and one edition in Dublin,—each one bearing the clever preface written by Franklin. In the year following, a French version, made by Jean Barbeu Dubourg, was published at Amsterdam, and was largely circulated upon the continent.

On both sides of the Atlantic, therefore, the "Farmer's Letters" gained universal attention among people interested in the rising American dispute. The name of John Dickinson became a name of literary renown surpassing that of any other American, excepting Benjamin Franklin. On the continent of Europe, these essays of the Pennsylvania Farmer became, for a time, the fashion: they were talked of in the salons of Paris; the Farmer himself was likened to Cicero[3]; and almost the highest distinction then possible for any man, was bestowed upon him through the notice and applause of Voltaire.[4] Even in England, the success of these writings was remarkable, and was shown quite as much in the censures, as in the praises, which were lavished upon them. They received the compliment of being regarded by Lord Hillsborough as "extremely wild."[5] The "Critical Review,"[6] which honored them

[1] P. L. Ford, "The Political Writings of John Dickinson," i. 283; C. R. Hildeburn, "The Issues of the Press in Pennsylvania," ii. 75 n.

[2] In the French edition, published at Amsterdam, it is stated that thirty editions had appeared in America within the first six months. It is probable that newspaper reprints were included in this estimate.

[3] George Bancroft, "History of the United States," 16th ed., vi. 149.

[4] Stillé, "Life of Dickinson," 92.

[5] "The Complete Works of Benjamin Franklin," Bigelow ed., iv. 130.

[6] Volume xxvi. 62. A considerable portion of the notice is given by P. L. Ford, "The Political Writings of John Dickinson," i. 282.

with its scornful disapprobation, expressed the opinion that Dickinson "would have proved himself a much better member of society had he never learned either to read or write," and that his book was "seditious in its principles, superficial in its execution, and tending to the perdition of the country for which" he was "so furious an advocate." On the other hand, among the English admirers of the "Farmer's Letters" was Edmund Burke, who gave his sanction to their principle[1]; while the "Monthly Review" closed a long notice of them by declaring that, if reason was to decide between England and her colonies, the author of these essays would "not perhaps easily meet with a satisfactory refutation."[2]

In America, the admiration and the gratitude of the people was expressed in almost every conceivable form. To this fact we have valid testimony, in the complaint of the royalist governor of Georgia, who, in May, 1768, wrote to Lord Hillsborough that by the Americans the Farmer was "adored," and that "no mark of honor and respect" was "thought equal to his merit."[3] Thanks were voted to him by political associations, by town-meetings, by grand juries. The College of New Jersey conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Laws. He became the favorite toast at public banquets. He was offered the membership of the choicest social clubs. On his entrance, one day, into a court room, whither business called him, the proceedings were stopped in order to recognize his presence, and to make acknowledgment of the greatness and splendor of his services to the country. Songs were written in his praise. Even in the pedestrian homeliness of prose, the resources of language were strained in the effort to celebrate the genius and the virtue of a man, who, as was said in one brochure, had "gloriously distinguished himself by asserting the rights

[1] George Bancroft, "History of the United States," 16th ed., vi. 148.

[2] Volume xxxix., 26.

[3] George Bancroft, "History of the United States," 16th ed., vi. 149. The governor of Georgia at that time was Sir James Wright.

and liberties of America, in a manner that renders him an honor to his education, a public blessing to his country, and will immortalize his name with renown to the latest ages of time." [1]

VII.

At the very time when these reverent, cautious, and persuasive essays by John Dickinson were passing into print for the first time, events were in progress which soon gave an almost ghastly tone to Dickinson's avowals of faith in the justice or the wisdom of the British government,—events which, indeed, pushed Dickinson himself a step or two nearer to the doctrine of forcible revolution. The last of the "Farmer's Letters" was published in February, 1768. In the following May, the new commissioners of customs arrived at Boston; in June, these commissioners, attempting to execute their odious office on John Hancock's sloop, "Liberty," were fiercely assaulted by the populace of Boston, and were driven for refuge to Castle William in Boston harbor; whereupon Governor Bernard summoned thither General Gage with his troops from Halifax,—thus replying to all the reason, and the moderation, and the filial tenderness of Dickinson's arguments, by the royal syllogism of gunpowder and cold steel.

Of these most ominous events in Boston, John Dickinson was an observer from his distant home on the Delaware; and even he, with all his deep loyalty and conscientious hesitation, was so stirred by them as then to utter what seems almost a ringing war-cry,—a clarion call to all Americans to stand forth together with united and undaunted front, and to the men over-sea who were pushing forward such mad measures, a stern clear undernote of warning. Taking for his model Garrick's "Hearts of Oak"—the air of which was then so familiar to every one—he wrote the

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[1] "An Elegy to the Infamous Memory of Sir F. B." The words quoted are from the dedication to the author of the "Farmer's Letters." Boston, 1769.

stanzas which he christened "A Song for American Freedom,"—a bit of versification obviously the work of a man neither born nor bred to that business. With some natural tremors of maidenly coyness, Dickinson at once sent the manuscript of his poem to his friend James Otis, in Boston; and by Otis, who knew real poetry when he saw it, the demerits of this song in that regard were freely pardoned for its practical value in giving sonorous voice to the emotion which was then beating in all hearts. At the instance of Otis, it was printed for the first time in the "Boston Gazette" for July 18, 1768, whence it was reprinted in nearly all the newspapers of the country; and being quickly caught up into universal favor under the endearing name of the "Liberty Song," its manly lines soon resounded over all the land; and thenceforward, for several years, it remained the most popular political song among us. Interpreted by the events of that anxious summer of 1768, with the customs commissioners driven off by the populace to a fortified island in Boston harbor, and with Gage's troops hurrying thither to introduce on behalf of the government a very different method of conducting the discussion, the singing of that rough song all about New England and far back along the wooded slopes of the western frontier, and all the way down the coast toward the Carolinas and Georgia, denoted in the American people the existence of a spirit not safe for kings and prime ministers to tamper with,—a spirit before which even a royalist governor and an armed British official might well have paused:

"Come join hand in hand, brave Americans all,
And rouse your bold hearts at fair Liberty's call;
No tyrannous acts shall suppress your just claim,
Or stain with dishonor America's name.
In freedom we 're born, and in freedom we 'll live;
Our purses are ready,—
Steady, friends, steady,—
Not as slaves, but as freemen, our money we 'll give!
. . . . . .

"How sweet are the labors that freemen endure,
That they shall enjoy all the profit secure;
No more such sweet labors Americans know,
If Britons shall reap what Americans sow.
In freedom, etc.

"Swarms of placemen and pensioners soon will appear,
Like locusts deforming the charms of the year;
Suns vainly will rise, showers vainly descend,
If we are to drudge for what others shall spend.
In freedom, etc.

. . . . . .

"All ages shall speak with amaze and applause
Of the courage we 'll show in support of our laws:
To die we can bear—but to serve we disdain,
For shame is to freemen more dreadful than pain.
In freedom, etc.

"This bumper I crown for our sovereign's health,
And this for Britannia's glory and wealth;
That wealth and that glory immortal may be,
If she is but just, and we are but free.
In freedom, etc." [1]

VIII.

Just seven days after John Dickinson's "Liberty Song" was, through the columns of a Boston newspaper, first given to the public, there was performed at Providence a symbolical and somewhat weird ceremony very expressive of the spirit which had begun to rule the time,—the dedication of a Tree of Liberty. The discourse which was spoken at this singular function reached its climax in a few words which betokened the general consciousness of the gravity of the struggle into which the American people were being forced, and their sense of kinship therein with all free-minded and resolute people in other parts of the world: "We do therefore, in the name and behalf of all true Sons of Liberty in

[1] Given in full by F. Moore, in "The Ballad History of the American Revolution," 20–21.

America, Great Britain, Ireland, Corsica, or wheresoever they are dispersed throughout the world, dedicate and solemnly devote this tree, to be a Tree of Liberty. May all our counsels and deliberations under its venerable branches, be guided by wisdom, and directed to the support and maintenance of that liberty which our renowned forefathers sought out and found under trees and in the wilderness. May it long flourish, and may the Sons of Liberty often repair hither to confirm and strengthen each other. When they look toward this sacred Elm, may they be penetrated with a sense of their duty to themselves, their country, and their posterity." [1]

The look of bitter joy, the shudder of proud pain, with which many noble-minded Americans then began to dwell upon the possibilities involved in all these hurrying events, may still be perceived by us in a pamphlet, published in New York in 1768, and bearing this striking title, "The Power and Grandeur of Great Britain Founded on the Liberty of the Colonies"; wherein the unknown writer describes himself, as "one who wishes to see an inviolable union formed between his majesty's American and British subjects; to see the British empire advanced to the highest pinnacle of earthly glory; to see it the sovereign of the world, and, at the same time, the protector of the liberties of mankind; to see her an example and encourager of every civil and religious virtue; to see America enjoying peace and plenty and the best of civil governments under her protection. . . . But if, for our sins, Providence should suffer pride, party-spirit, envy, and avarice to defeat the measures of the real well-wishers of their country, I see Britain reduced in her trade, depopulated by the transmigration of her people to America, her populous trading and manufacturing cities deserted, her nobles for want of ten-

[1] "A Discourse delivered in Providence . . . upon the 25th Day of July, 1768, at the Dedication of the Tree of Liberty," by a Son of Liberty. Providence, 1768, p. 16. I met with this pamphlet at the library of the American Antiquarian Society.

ants tilling their own grounds, and calling on oppressed disaffected America to relieve and defend her against the power of her enemies; in short, I see Britain in America, and America in Britain." [1]

The political tension of the year 1768, prolonged into the year 1769, was then still further increased, on the one hand, by several resolutions of parliament in support of the ministerial policy, one of them directing that persons accused of treason in America should be brought to England for trial; and, on the other hand, by several resolutions against the ministerial policy passed by the colonial assemblies, and especially by a general agreement throughout the colonies to boycott all British commerce until the ministry and parliament should come to a better mind.

In the vast throng of American writings dealing with these harassing topics, we may find it to our purpose to delay a moment before one piece of vigorous and high-spirited verse, entitled "Liberty, a Poem: Lately Found in a Bundle of Papers Said to be Written by a Hermit in New Jersey." For its motto, it bore the noble sentence which during all that period was quoted in America more frequently, perhaps, than any other,—"Whoever would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety, deserves neither liberty nor safety." Nowhere has this poem a line which in austerity of principle falls below that legend. The thought which throughout asserts itself most forcibly, is that if the Americans are indeed insubmissive to the base lessons which would teach them to be slaves, it is because they have in their veins the blood of Britons, and before their eyes the example of Britons in standing up for liberty against whatsoever odds:

> "And shall we want the spirit to be free?
> That spirit, Britain, we derived from thee.
> We are thy offspring—and we 'll sooner part
> With every drop that flows around the heart,

[1] "The Power and Grandeur of Great Britain," etc., 23–24.

Than tamely yield our birthright. If it must,
Let ruin crush our cities into dust;
Let madness arm thy self-destroying hand
To drench with civil blood this peaceful land,
Or make us fly from tyranny's control,
Beyond the limits of the frozen pole.
We are thy offspring. Heavens! how have we loved
Our mother's name, and with what ardor proved
Our duty and our love; and were she still
But kind and just, how gladly would we spill
That blood for her which, now, at freedom's call,
Perhaps must turn to bitterness and gall."[1]

IX.

At about this time, also, several American writers[2] then resident abroad began to manifest in a public way their sympathy with the political solicitude that had once more taken possession of their countrymen at home. Notable among such transmarine Americans was Arthur Lee, a writer whose high literary reputation among his contemporaries rests upon no materials which can justify its revival at the hands of posterity. He was born in Virginia in 1740, the youngest of six brothers, all of whom rose to distinction in their day. He was a scholar of Eton College, a graduate in medicine of the University of Edinburgh, then a member of one of the Inns of Court in London, afterward for many

[1] "Liberty, a Poem," etc., 9.

[2] Among these writers, for whom I do not think it necessary to make room in the text, may here be named Edward Bancroft, a singularly versatile and successful American scoundrel then living in England, who in later years made his fortune partly by the process of compound interest from well-paid rascality, —now selling the secrets of his own country to England, and then selling the secrets of England to his own country. The best sketch of him known to me, is by Paul Leicester Ford, in his edition of Bancroft's treacherous "Narrative of the Objects and Proceedings of Silas Deane as Commissioner of the United Colonies to France: Made to the British Government in 1776." This is the gentleman, who, in 1769, published in London a rather clumsy piece of political statement on the colonial side of the question, entitled "Remarks on the Review of the Controversy between Great Britain and Her Colonies."

years active in the foreign service of the American Congress. A man of ability, integrity, and patriotism, the value of all that he did or said was constantly hurt by an inordinate and a fussy sense of his own importance, by a morbid jealousy of others, and by an invincible habit of suspicion, opposition, and disparagement.[1] His chief contributions to the political literature of the Revolution are, first, "The Monitor," a series of seven essays, published in London in 1768, after having been previously published in Virginia[2]; secondly, "The Political Detection; or, the Treachery and Tyranny of Administration, both at Home and Abroad, displayed in a Series of Letters signed Junius Americanus," published in London in 1770; and, thirdly, "An Appeal to the Justice and Interests of the People of Great Britain, in the present Disputes with America," published in London in 1774, under the feigned authorship of "an old Member of Parliament."[3]

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[1] It was difficult for him to agree exactly with any statement on any subject as made by anybody but himself. Thus, being caught in a shower, Lee met under a shed a gentleman who, by way of affability, ventured upon a remark which he probably thought a safe one: "It rains very hard, sir." To this, however, Lee replied: "It rains hard, sir; but I don't think you can say it rains very hard." George Tucker, "Life of Jefferson," i. 180.

[2] The London reprint was in "The American Gazette," number ii. 189–218, and is of the date as given above. I used the copy in the Harvard library. For the year of the publication of "The Monitor," Jefferson, in his "Notes on Virginia," happened to mention 1769; and most writers who have had occasion to refer to the subject,—as Allen, Drake, Allibone, and the writer of the article on Arthur Lee in "Appleton's Cyclopædia of Am. Biog.,"—appear to have followed one another back to this wrong date as started by Jefferson.

[3] Considerable portions of Arthur Lee's personal and official correspondence are given in his "Life," by Richard Henry Lee, Boston, 1829. A "Calendar of the Arthur Lee Manuscripts in the library of Harvard University" was published in 1882, and forms the eighth number of "Bibliographical Contributions," edited by Justin Winsor. These papers were given to the Harvard library by Richard Henry Lee in 1827, and are bound in eight volumes.

CHAPTER XI.

BRITISH TEA AS A POLITICAL INTOXICANT IN AMERICA: 1770–1774.

I.—The grotesque prominence given to Tea in the Anglo-American controversy —Outline of the history of ministerial measures which forced on this result —These measures derided by Junius, and by Edmund Burke.

II.—Jests by English opponents of the ministry on its policy of forcing the Americans to drink Tea.

III.—The American verse-writers imprecating Tea as the bearer of political woes—"Virginia Banishing Tea"—"The Blasted Herb"—The malediction of Tea in "The American Liberty Song"—"The Cup infused with Bane"—"A Lady's Adieu to Her Tea-Table"—A jocose anathema of Tea in "A New Song to an Old Tune."

IV.—A humorous version of the Tea-troubles given in "The First Book of the American Chronicles of the Times."

V.—How the controversy over Tea brought on American political Union, through the First Continental Congress in 1774.

I.

In our effort to trace the development of thought and emotion behind the historic events which form the outward framework of the American Revolution, we now reach a point where the tragedy of this most bitter race-quarrel enters upon a phase which may seem not only comic but even frivolous,—as though the gods themselves, coming down from Olympus and mixing in the tumults of men, were trying to show us the absurdity of our grandiose attempts at important business, and were all the time laughing at us for taking ourselves so seriously.

It is doubtful if anything could be invented more effective as burlesque upon the supposed rationality and dignity of what then called itself statesmanship, than is furnished by the bald facts embodying the successive measures of minis-

terial policy toward the American colonies during the dozen years prior to that of the Declaration of Independence. For, in 1763, having then greatly enlarged both her dominions and her debts, England gives fair notice that, in her opinion, the time has come for us Americans, having always shared in the benefits of the empire, at last to share also in its general costs. To this reasonable demand we make no grave objection, only insisting that the amount of our contribution for imperial expenses, being indicated from year to year by royal requisitions, shall be raised by us in the usual way—that is, in the constitutional and English way—through our local legislatures, these being composed of persons chosen by ourselves and empowered to act for us in the public expenditure of our money. Unhappily, however, upon this question of mere method in the doing of a thing which both parties deem proper and right, comes the first, and also the fatal, breach,—a breach which through preposterous mismanagement grows wider and wider till it divides two kindred peoples by a space more enormous than that of the sea which rolls between them. Under the American revenue act of 1764, and in order to enable us to do what we are already quite willing to do—to pay our fair share of imperial expenses—the very method is chosen which we are obliged to regard as both unconstitutional and dangerous: our money is to be taken, not through the free action of our own legislatures, but under the imposition of a legislature three thousand miles away. Having thus chosen an improper method of doing a proper thing, the government naturally proceeds to intensify our consciousness of the fact by a second and a more accentuated use of that method, namely, by the requirement of revenue stamps in America for nearly all professional and commercial transactions between civilized men. These revenue stamps, accordingly, we refuse to buy, or even to tolerate in the land ; and in giving rather animated expression to this refusal, we cause such an uproar, that, in the following year, 1766, the government abandons its plan for taking our

money in that particular way, at the same time declaring to us its perfect right to take our money either in that way or in any other. This theoretical assertion of right we could have borne, if only it had remained theoretical[1]; but, in 1767, it is made practical, and consequently offensive and even alarming, by a new measure, which places duties on six great articles of import,—glass, red lead, white lead, paper, painters' colors, and especially tea. Whereupon we proceed to bind ourselves to an agreement that, so long as this law remains in force, we will endeavor to get on without purchasing from our English brethren their glass, their red lead, their white lead, their paper, their painters' colors, and especially their tea. Then for three angry years, follows much debate, recrimination, hubbub,—all the while the item of tea becoming more and more prominent in the column of items on which the obnoxious tax is levied; and, at the end of that time, that is, in the spring of 1770, the ministry inform us that, in view of our objections, they have concluded to withdraw the offensive tax on the first five articles, leaving, however, the same offensive tax on the sixth article—the article of tea—merely to mark a principle. Instead of relieving the strain, this announcement only increases it; since it never was either the subject of the tax or the size of the tax, but always the principle of the tax, which had disturbed us. In other words, these Wise Men in the East undertake to pacify a loyal and a generous but a proud people to whom the revenue act of 1767 has given serious annoyance, by so amending that Act as to retain in it everything that was ever seriously annoying. In 1770, therefore, the other articles of taxation being withdrawn, the dispute respecting the mere principle of taxation is left to be waged around this single article of tea. Then, against the lovely little tea plant alone, we proceed to frame our solemn leagues and covenants; and we make and take mighty oaths to the effect that we will not import it, nor buy it, nor sell it, nor drink it, nor have anything whatso-

[1] "Works of Franklin," Bigelow ed., iii. 423.

ever to do with it excepting to curse it. Then pass by three years more of ever-deepening discord and exasperation, after which time, in April, 1773, upon motion of Lord North, the government falls back upon its favorite and sovereign remedy of a bribe,—allowing such a drawback on all tea exported from England to America as will enable the Americans to buy their tea, even though loaded with the three-penny tax, at a much lower price than the same tea is sold for in England.[1] The inventors of this noble piece of political chicanery "have no idea," says Franklin,[2] "that any people can act from any other principle but that of interest; and they believe that three pence in a pound of tea, of which one does perhaps drink ten pounds in a year, is sufficient to overcome all the patriotism of an American." "No man ever doubted," exclaims Burke, in the house of commons, "that the commodity of tea could bear an imposition of three pence. But no commodity will bear three pence, or will bear a penny, when the general feelings of men are irritated, and two millions of people are resolved not to pay."[3] And when, in accordance with this palpable trick for accomplishing by an appeal to our avarice what could not be accomplished by an appeal to any other motive, several shiploads of the tea are brought hither in the latter part of 1773, we angrily reject the bribe—all the more angrily, perhaps, because we half suspect the stability of our own virtue in rejecting it; and then in our anger giving way to lawlessness, we proceed to destroy much valuable property belonging to subjects of the king. We smash the tea-chests, and we pitch their contents overboard, in one place; from two other places, we send the ships with their cargoes back to England; we burn the tea to ashes, in another place; we deposit it in a damp cellar and so spoil it, in another place. Naturally, the boldest and the most flagrant of these acts of insubmission—that which occurred

[1] Lord North's resolutions were introduced April 27, 1773. Hansard, "Parliamentary History," xvii. 840–841.

[2] "Works," Bigelow ed., v. 147.

[3] "Works," ii. 17.

in the harbor of Boston—is selected by the government for its most conspicuous measure of punishment: that port is by law hermetically sealed up, and the poorer inhabitants of a city dependent on maritime commerce are given over to starvation. Immediately, the doom which thus falls upon the single colony of Massachusetts, is accepted by her sisters as the doom of all. Then, as never before, the Thirteen Colonies rally to one common standard, and face together the common peril; then, as never before, are very busy their committees of correspondence; then comes the Continental Congress, then the gathering of military stores, the mustering of armed men, and, finally, as was to be expected, the accident of a little bloodshed; and then, of course, over land and sea is heard the song of the weird sisters, followed by eight years of hurly-burly, these to be followed perhaps by endless years of international hate.

Such was the process of the American Revolution. Was ever statesmanship so blind? Was ever the birth of an implacable race-feud so needless? And, indeed, even while these measures of the government were in progress, and before they had reached the stage of fatal culmination, their fatuity was exposed by many great writers and orators in England, as by Junius, who, so early as in 1769, with his most bitter wit derided them as pitifully inconsistent, as having already "alienated the colonies,"[1] as having made the reign of George the Third "a reign of experiments."[2] "Nothing in all the world," said Edmund Burke, in 1774, "can read so awful and so instructive a lesson . . . upon the mischief of not having large and liberal ideas in the management of great affairs. Never have the servants of the state looked at the whole of your complicated interests in one connected view. They have taken things by bits and scraps, some at one time and one pretense, and some at another, just as they pressed, without any sort of regard

[1] This was a leading topic for invective in the first letter of Junius, dated January 21, 1769. "Junius," i. 107–109.

[2] Ibid. 171.

to their relations or dependencies. They never had any kind of system, right or wrong; but only invented occasionally some miserable tale for the day, in order meanly to sneak out of difficulties into which they had proudly strutted."[1] "What woful variety of schemes have been adopted; what enforcing, and what repealing; what bullying and what submitting; what doing and undoing; what straining and what relaxing; what assemblies dissolved for not obeying, and called again without obedience; what troops sent out to quell resistance, and, on meeting that resistance, recalled; what shiftings, and changes, and jumblings of all kinds of men at home, which left no possibility of order, consistency, vigor, or even so much as a decent unity of color, in any one public measure."[2] "By such management, by the irresistible operation of feeble councils, so paltry a sum as three pence in the eyes of a financier, so insignificant an article as tea in the eyes of a philosopher, have shaken the pillars of a commercial empire that circled the whole globe."[3]

II.

The latent comedy of the situation flashes upon us now from the grotesque prominence then given, in the politics of the British empire, to this coy and quiet-loving tea plant—thus selected to stand alone and bear the whole brunt of colonial enmity to parliamentary taxation. By a sort of sarcasm of fate, it happened that between the years 1770 and 1775, this ministress of gentleness and peace—this homelike, dainty, and consolatory shrub of Cathay—came to be regarded, both in America and in England, as the one active and malignant cause of nearly all the ugly and disastrous business that filled up those years. Perhaps it was not altogether in jest, that an explanation of the American revolt then commonly offered, connected it with England's seeming determination to compel her colonial children to drink tea—a species of liquid nourishment for which they

[1] "Works," ii. 14. [2] Ibid. 69. [3] Ibid. 14–15.

were ironically said to have an extreme dislike. This was the view frequently presented by the oppositionist newspapers in England, which delighted to chaff the ministry over their preposterous policy in treating the Americans with so much harshness merely for their alleged disinclination to that particular beverage. Not long after the arrival in London of the tidings of the Bunker Hill fight, the "St. James's Chronicle" burlesqued the statesmanship which had brought so hideous an event to pass, by representing the ministerial troops as addressing the women of Boston in these bland words:

"O Boston wives and maids, draw near and see
Our delicate Souchong and Hyson tea;
Buy it, my charming girls, fair, black, or brown,—
If not, we 'll cut your throats, and burn your town!"[1]

That a war with England had actually broken out in Massachusetts, seemed to be the effect of the news from Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill; but just what the war was about, and especially just which party was to blame for it, was tersely set forth by a London newspaper in some half a dozen verses which seemed to put the American Iliad of that time into a nutshell:

"Rudely forced to drink tea, Massachusetts in anger
Spills the tea on John Bull—John falls on to bang her:
Massachusetts, enraged, calls her neighbors to aid,
And gives master John a severe bastinade!
Now, good men of the law, pray who is in fault,—
The one who begins, or resists the assault?"[2]

A few months later, a newspaper writer in London sent over to New York the important information that the ministry, having found among the Americans so great a repug-

[1] F. Moore, "Diary of the Am. Rev.," i. 140.

[2] Republished, from "a London newspaper," in "The Constitutional Gazette" for Nov. 25, 1775; and reprinted in F. Moore, "Diary of the Am. Rev.," i. 168.

nance to tea, were about to make matters right by supplying them with an altogether different drink: "Several contractors have set off for Rome for a fresh supply of Jesuits' bark; as tea does not agree with an American stomach, being apt to produce the heartburn. There is a rumor the new parliament intends to force the bark upon the Yankees, especially as Doctor Bute recommends it as a great specific for the Fever of Rebellion."[1] Even the English punsters in the pay of the ministry may have supposed themselves to be dealing in philosophy as well as wit, when they characterized the political storm then rising in America, as only a tempest in a teapot!

III.

In this way, too, it happened that in the writings produced among us from 1767 to 1770, and especially from 1770 to 1775, the most precious interests of the American people seem to be imperiled and the peace of the whole world to be disturbed by this hitherto amiable and pacific tea plant. Through a ludicrous metonomy in our political rhetoric, the harmless thing comes to be regarded by us with detestation as the very embodiment of political outrage and shame; so that at last upon it alone are concentrated and wreaked all the suspicions and all the animosities of a quarrel that finally broke asunder a great empire and smote two continents with the thunders and sorrows of war. The innocent shrub, which the gentlest of English poets was soon afterward to glorify as giving to its devotees those

> . . . "cups
> That cheer but not inebriate,"[2]

seldom receives in our literature for these years any less lurid description than that of "the detestable plant," or "the pestilential herb." Just south of the Potomac, a

[1] "The New York Packet," Jan. 4, 1776; reprinted in F. Moore, "Diary of the Am. Rev.," i. 190.

[2] "The Task," Book iv. lines 39–40. This poem was first published in 1785.

much-excited young woman, addicted, as she supposed, to poetry as well as to politics, sends forth to the world a number of stanzas entitled "Virginia Banishing Tea," wherein that valorous colony exclaims,—

"Begone! pernicious, baleful Tea,
With all Pandora's ills possessed;
Hyson, no more beguiled by thee
My noble sons shall be oppressed."[1]

A rhymester in New Hampshire fires at it a tremendous broadside of poetical hot shot:

"Rouse, every generous thoughtful mind,
The rising danger flee;
If you would lasting freedom find,
Now, then, abandon Tea!"[2]

Another rhyming patriot, whose scorn of English tyranny seems to extend even to the tyranny of English grammar, vituperates it in words that make no effort to seem mild—words that bespeak a pent-up rage which is doubtless noble, even if slightly profane:

"The State-bunglers shall see
We despise their curş'd Tea,
Since a way for Oppression it paves.
. . . . . .
Vain foolish curmudgeons,
To think we, like gudgeons,
Swallow baits that of Freedom bereaves;
Tea, nabobs, and minions,
With their dire opinions,
May be damned—but we 'll not be slaves."[3]

[1] The entire ballad is given in F. Moore, "Ballad History of the Am. Rev.," 170.

[2] "The Blasted Herb," originally published in "The New Hampshire Gazette," afterward printed in broadside and sung to a sacred tune. The ten stanzas composing it are given in F. Moore, "Ballad History," etc., 171–172.

[3] From "The American Liberty Song," in thirteen stanzas, published in broadside without date, but probably about 1773. The only copy I remember to have seen is in the library of the Pa. Hist. Soc.

On the very day on which a certain agreement for total abstinence from tea was to go into effect, another poet, more pensive than the others, salutes it in these words of political austerity, written with a diamond on a pane of glass:

"Ah, fated plant of India's shore!
Thy wonted steams must rise no more
In Freedom's sacred land.
This day her genuine sons ordain,
To dash the cup infused with bane
By North's insidious hand.
The period fixed—thy banished time—
A diamond celebrates in rhyme,
And marks the patriot day;
While Phœbus, from his heavenly arch,
Sheds lustre on the first of March,
And points it with a ray."[1]

As the drinking of tea was supposed to be a peculiarly feminine luxury, the Whig ladies in most of the colonies abjured its use from the date fixed upon by public resolution; and it is among the picturesque traditions of the period how these patriotic housewives, as the fatal day drew on, sealed up their stocks of tea and laid them away—not to be touched till the troubles should be over. Even then, there were some who did not fail to see a certain ludicrous quality in this vast continental uprising against the delicate and blameless beverage, as in these lines, entitled "A Lady's Adieu to her Tea-Table," in which the melancholy event of parting with it is set forth with mock pathos and half-comic gravity:

"Farewell the tea-board, with its gaudy equipage
Of cups and saucers, cream-bucket, sugar-tongs;
The pretty tea-chest, also, lately stored
With Hyson, Congo, and best Double-Fine.

[1] First printed in "The New York Journal," March 23, 1775; reproduced in F. Moore, "Ballad History," etc., 340.

Full many a joyous moment I 've sat by ye,
Hearing the girls tattle, the old maids talk scandal,
And the spruce coxcombs laugh—maybe—at nothing!
No more shall I dish out the once-loved liquor—
Though now detestable;
Because I 'm taught, and believe it true,
Its use will fasten slavish chains upon my country;
For Liberty 's the goddess I would choose
To reign triumphant in America." [1]

As showing how, even in America, and even after the fighting began, the same dramatic prominence continued, in the popular imagination, to be given to tea as the chief baleful factor in the fiercer politics of the year 1775, may here be cited a sprightly street ballad, " A New Song to an Old Tune," written between the Lexington and Concord day and the day of Bunker Hill, and after the arrival at Boston of the three famous British generals, Clinton, Howe, and Burgoyne:

" What a court hath Old England of folly and sin—
Spite of Chatham, and Camden, Barrè, Burke, Wilkes, and Glynne!
Not content with the Game Act, they tax fish and sea,
And America drench with hot water and tea.
Derry down, down, hey derry down.

" Lord Sandwich, he swears they are terrible cowards,
Who can't be made brave by the blood of the Howards;
And to prove there is truth in America's fears,
He conjures Sir Peter's ghost 'fore the Peers.

" Now, indeed, if these poor people's nerves are so weak,
How cruel it is their destruction to seek!
Dr. Johnson 's a proof, in the highest degree—
His soul and his system were changèd by tea.

[1] F. Moore, " Ballad History of the Am. Rev.," 46.

"But if the wise council of England doth think,
They may be enslaved by the power of drink,
They 're right to enforce it,—but then, do you see?
The colonies, too, may refuse, and be free.

"There 's no knowing where this oppression will stop;
Some say—'There 's no cure but a capital chop'[1]:
And that I believe 's each American's wish,
Since you 've drenched them with tea, and deprived 'em of fish.

"The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
By the gods, for poor Dan Adam's use were made free,
Till a man with more power than old Moses would wish,
Said—'Ye wretches, ye sha'n't touch a fowl or a fish!'

"Three Generals these mandates have borne cross the sea,
To deprive 'em of fish and to make 'em drink tea;
In turn, sure, these freemen will boldly agree,
To give 'em a dance upon Liberty Tree.

"Then freedom 's the word, both at home and abroad,
And—every scabbard that hides a good sword!
Our forefathers gave us this freedom in hand,
And we 'll die in defense of the rights of the land.
Derry down, down, hey derry down."[2]

IV.

For this entire phase of the Revolutionary conflict, there exists a somewhat remarkable piece of humorous literature, entitled "The First Book of the American Chronicles of

[1] If this jocose expression suggests anything more than the decapitation of a wicked prime-minister, it must be the cutting of the cord that then bound America to the British empire,—another proof of the fact that the doctrine of Independence was not taken up and advocated by responsible statesmen in America until many months after it had found more or less open championship among the song-writers and newspaper humorists who, protected by their obscurity, thus flung up into the air a dangerous thought which was already slowly fermenting in the minds of the people.

[2] F. Moore, "Ballad History," etc., 176–177.

the Times."[1] This little book, itself but the beginning of an unfinished work, consists of some six chapters which seem to have been first printed serially in the latter part of 1774 and in the early part of 1775. It is probable, also, that in consequence of the change in motive and method brought about by the Lexington and Concord fights, the further development of this amusing satire came to an unintended close. Not a little of the humor of the book is due to its literary form—that of scriptural parody; for it undertakes to narrate contemporary events after the manner of the historical books of the Old Testament, particularly of the Kings and the Chronicles,—a species of literary mirth very effective among a people addicted from childhood to the reading of the Hebrew Scriptures. Employing very cleverly this quaint phraseology, and getting at times extremely droll effects through the clash of modern inci-

[1] This vivacious specimen of American humor, which made a considerable mark at the time of its publication, seems to have fallen almost entirely out of men's notice since then. Excepting in a library catalogue, and in Hildeburn, "Issues of the Pa. Press," ii. 179, I do not remember to have seen any mention of it. I first came across it in 1880 in the library of my lamented friend, Mr. C. Fiske Harris, of Providence, who, however, was unable to give me any information about it; and when, in the following year, I read some parts of it to another valued friend, now also gone from us, Mr. Charles Deane, of Cambridge, I was told by him that he had never before heard of it. Since that time, I have met with two other copies; one belonging to the Massachusetts Historical Society, another to the Library Company of Philadelphia. The Fiske Harris copy is without title-page or page numbers; and each of its five chapters ends with the words, "[To be continued] Boston, Printed and Sold by John Boyle, 1775." The copy belonging to the Massachusetts Historical Society has the same five chapters; at the end of each chapter the imprint of D. Kneeland, in Queen Street; but at the end of the third chapter, the date 1775, also the announcement that, at the printer's may be had "complete setts of these Chronicles." The copy belonging to the Library Company of Philadelphia was printed and sold by B. Towne in Philadelphia; it contains six chapters; and by the imprint at the end of each, it appears that the first was issued there in October, 1774, the second in November, and the third and fourth in December, of the same year, while the fifth and sixth were issued in February, 1775. A third edition of the first chapter was also announced. I am inclined to think that the work was not written in New England, but in the neighborhood of Philadelphia: its humor is as the humor of Francis Hopkinson.

dents with ancient and venerable associations, it gives a ludicrous version of Anglo-American history during the later stages of the tea-troubles, especially from the autumn of 1773 to the autumn and winter of 1774, wherein all our calamities are seen to flow from the fact that the king has set up for our worship the god of the heathen—the Tea-Chest, whose length is three cubits, and the breadth thereof one cubit and a half.

The story begins in the true epic manner: it plunges into the midst of things, by telling of the wrath of King George the Third at the horrid tidings, early in 1774, of the destruction of the tea in Boston harbor in December of the previous year:

"1. And behold! when the tidings came to the great city that is afar off, the city that is in the land of Britain, how the men of Boston, even the Bostonites, had arose, a great multitude, and destroyed the Tea, the abominable merchandise of the east, and cast it into the midst of the sea:

"2. That the Lord the King waxed exceeding wroth, insomuch that the form of his visage was changed, and his knees smote one against the other.

"3. Then he assembled together the Princes, the Nobles, the Counselors, the Judges, and all the Rulers of the people, even the great Sanhedrim, and when he had told them what things were come to pass,

"4. They smote their breasts and said, these men fear thee not, O King, neither have they obeyed the voice of our Lord the King, nor worshipped the Tea-Chest, which thou hast set up, whose length was three cubits, and the breadth thereof one cubit and a half.

"5. Now, therefore, make a decree that their harbours be blocked up, and ports shut, that their merchants may be broke, and their multitudes perish, that there may be no more the voice of merchandise heard in the land, that their ships that goeth upon the waters, may be sunk in the depths thereof, and their mariners dwindle away to nought, that their cods and their oil may stink, and the whale, the

great Leviathan, may be no more troubled, for that they have rebelled against thee.

" 6. And it came to pass that the King hearkened unto the voice of these sons of Belial."

This, of course, is meant to give us the origin of the Boston port bill, which became a law in the spring of 1774. While, however, that drastic measure is under consideration, an effort to prevent its adoption is made by an aged and astute counselor, named Mordecai the Benjamite, to-wit, Benjamin Franklin, then colonial agent in London, and likewise deputy postmaster-general for North America:

" 7. Then arose Mordecai, the Benjamite, who was fourscore and five years old, an aged man whom the Lord loved, a wise man, a soothsayer, an astrologer, in whom was wisdom from above, and he said unto the King, I pray thee, O King, let thy servant speak.

" 8. And the King commanded that he should speak.

" 9. Then Mordecai spake aloud, in the presence of all the Princes, the Nobles, the Counselors, the Judges, and the Rulers of the people, and said, O King, live for ever.

" 10. Thy throne, O King, is encompassed about with lies, and thy servants, the Bernardites, and the Hutchinsonians, are full of deceit; for be it known unto thee, O King, they hide the truth from thee, and wrongfully accuse the men of Boston; for behold, these letters in mine hand witnesseth sore against them; O King, if thou art wise, thou wilt understand these things.

" 11. And there was present one of the King's Counselors, a Jacobite, a vagabond, a Wedderburnite, and he used foul language, and said unto Mordecai, Thou liest; and Mordecai answered and said unto him, God will smite thee, thou whited wall; and Mordecai departed from amongst them.

" 12. And behold the Princes, the Nobles, the Counselors, the Judges, and all the Rulers of the people, cried out vehemently against Mordecai, for they were in fear because of Mordecai's wisdom.

"13. And they besought the King that he would take from Mordecai his post, for he was in high honour before that time.

"14. So they prevailed on the King and he took from Mordecai his post and all that he had, and Mordecai was persecuted yet more and more; but he bore it patiently, for Job was his grandfather's great-grandfather; moreover, he knew the times must alter, and the King's eyes would be opened anon."

The chronicler next proceeds to shift the scene from England to America, telling how the King orders one of his generals to take fierce warriors, and sail away in ships, and invade the land of the Bostonites:

"15. Now in the seventh month, in the fourteenth day of the month, the Lord the King commanded Thomas, the captain of the Gageites, saying,

"16. Choose thou the valiant men of Britain, by hundreds and by thousands, and get ye together the ships, even the ships of war, the terror of the nations round about, and make your way towards the coasts of the Americanites, the land of the Bostonians, that lieth on the other side of the sea westwards, and cut off all [their men], and utterly destroy all their cities with fire and with sword, for they have rebelled against me.

"17. Howbeit, the men of Boston had intelligence thereof, for they kept their spies abroad from the east to the west, and from the north to the south; and when the tidings came of these things, they rent their clothes, and fasted, and put on sackcloth, and went softly.

. . . . . .

"23. And behold when Thomas, the Gageite, was come into the land of the Bostonites, he threatened them sore, and swore by the life of Pharaoh, insomuch that some of the old women and children lifted up their voices, and wept exceedingly, with bitter lamentations."

Nevertheless, while some of the old women and children among the Bostonites thus exhibit fear at the sight and

sound of these men of war, the people in general, and especially their leaders, do not give way to unseemly fright, but keep their heads so well as to be able to practice much mischief upon Thomas the Gageite, especially to tease him with the subtleties of their politics; whereat he becomes sore in heart, and much discouraged, and writes a letter of dolorous complaint to the king:

"5. O King, thy servant is in a great strait; the men of New England are stiff-necked, and as stubborn hogs, neither knoweth thy servant what to make of them; they are worse unto me than all the plagues of Egypt.

"6. For they resolve upon resolves, they address, they complain, they protest, they compliment, they flatter, they sooth, and they threaten to root me up.

"7. Now, therefore, O King, I pray thee send able Counselors over, that they may advise and counsel thy servant, lest they circumvent him, and he appear foolish in the eyes of all the people; for thou knowest, O King, thy servant is no conjurer.

"8. Moreover, all my Counselors have forsaken me, and resigned, and are become like unto Job's comforters; thy servant knoweth not what to do.

"9. For the men of New England are as venomous as the poison of a serpent, even like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears; they give good words with their mouths, but curse with their hearts; they go to and fro in the evening and grin like a dog, and run about through the city; they slander thy servant, they make a byword of him, and grudge him everything; yet complain if they be not satisfied.

"10. Surely, O King, the spirit of Oliver or the devil is got in them."

The effect of this complaint is to convince the king that his general hath need, not of more men to advise, but of more men to fight. Wherefore he gathers together another great host of fierce men of war, and putting them on board his mighty ships, despatches them over the sea westward,

commanding them to make short work with these disobedient and cunning Bostonites. Already, however, among the Bostonites themselves is some expectation of so dreadful an enlargement of the number of the enemies within their gates; and at last the coming of the mighty host is seen afar off by one of the leaders of the people, named Jeremiah, to-wit, Samuel Adams:

"27. Now Jeremiah, the son of the prophet, got himself up on high, and climbed on the top of Liberty Tree, and sat there from the morning until the evening, and said,

"28. Behold yonder I see a dark cloud, like unto a large sheet, rise from the North, big with oppression and desolation, and the four corners thereof are held up by the four great beasts, Bute, Mansfield, Bernard and Hutchinson;

"29. Carrying a large swarm, like unto locusts, of sycophants, commissioners, duty-gatherers, custom-house officers, searchers, tide-waiters, placemen and pensioners innumerable;

"30. The bastards and spurious breed of Noble-men, and the children of harlots."

Certainly not even Jeremiah, the son of the prophet, from his high watch on the top of Liberty Tree, could stay the progress of this formidable host bringing succor to Thomas the Gageite; and, accordingly, their arrival in the harbor of Boston, and all the evil they did there, and how they hemmed in the city and cut off its communications with the inhabitants of the back country,—all this is set forth in faithful words, of which the following are a part:

. . . . . .

"45. Now, it came to pass when the Gageites had received succor, they prepared to go against the city, in which were men of valor, and old women and children, and the mothers of children, and grandmothers and the mothers of mothers.

"46. And they brought their battering rams, and their cannon, whose mouths were of the diameter of a cubit, and

whose throats were like unto open sepulchres, and which bellowed out fire, and smoke, and saltpetre, and brimstone.

"47. And they planted them on the neck of the Bostonites, and they laid siege against it, and builded a fort and bulwarks, and cast a mount, and set the camp against it, and laid engines of war against it round about.

"48. And their ships, even their mighty ships of war, with their iron tiers, their pride and their boast, whose masts are of the stately cedars of Lebanon, and the huge pine from the Norwegian hills, surrounded the posts round about, so that the ships of the merchants that came to traffic from the isles afar off could not enter.

"49. And they jested one with another, and made mouths, and squinted with their eyes, and said, Let us cut off the communication between the city and country, and pinch them by famine, and they will surely give up, and fall a prey into our hands."

. . . . . .

"36. Now it came to pass, while the Gageites abode in the land of the Bostonites, they day by day committed iniquity; they made great clattering with their sackbuts, their psalteries, their dulcimers, bands of music, and vain parade.

"37. And they drummed with their drums, and piped with their pipes, making mock fights, and running to and fro like shitepokes on the muddy shore.

"38. Moreover, by night, they abused the watchmen on duty, and the young children of Boston by the wayside, making mouths at them, calling them Yankees. . . .

"39. And it provoked the young men, and they said unto Aminidab, We cannot bear this; these seven times have they vexed us; for they gape upon us with their mouths, as it were a ramping and roaring lion.

"40. Now therefore, speak unto Jedediah the priest, that he would blow the ram's horn and conch shells, that we may go and smite the heathen. . . .

"41. But Jedediah, the priest, answered and said, Nay,

my sons, let us bear with them yet seventy and seven times. . . .

" 42. Only be of good courage and strong, pluck up your hearts, dread not nor be afraid, hold up your heads, and look like young unicorns: for they are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them."

V.

Thus, the chronicler brings his story onward to a very great event in the history of those times—the immediate origin of the American Union through the call of the distressed Bostonites for a great council to be held by them and their brethren of the other tribes in the coasts of America. For, when the oppression practiced upon the men of Boston became too great for them to resist or to bear alone, and especially when " Thomas the Gageite, the Captain of the Heathen, came by night to steal away their powder, and their implements of war, and to seize their brethren and send them away captives to Babel, to be tried by the Heathen laws, and peradventure hanged for supposed transgressions,

" 35. Then arose Jedediah the priest, and Aminidab, and Obadiah, and Jeremiah, and lifted up their voices, and spake aloud and said,

" 36. Fathers, brethren, and the children of our fathers, ye have heard of all the evil that has been brought upon our city, the city of our forefathers, the New Canaan, the land of Promise, and behold this day it is desolate, and no man dwelleth therein.

" 37. How doth the city remain solitary that was full of people; she is as a widow: she that was great amongst the nations, and princess among the provinces, is about to be made tributary, and bow down to the Tea Chest, the God of the Heathen. . . .

" 28. Be of good comfort, let us send messengers into all the coasts of our brethren the Americanites, peradventure

they will commune with us, for we be one people, and serve one God: If so be they hear us, the Lord is on our side; but if they refuse to hearken unto us, they and we be then slaves to the Gageites, and our substance and all that we have, taken from us, and we be their hewers of wood and drawers of water.

"29. And all the people shouted, and said with one voice, send and commune with our brethren.

"30. Now it came to pass that their brethren listened unto them, and they sent messengers backwards and forwards throughout the land, from the east unto the west, and from the north unto the south, even unto the sea coast of the Georgeites.

"31. And they assembled themselves together, in a Congress in the great city of Philadelphia, in the house of the Carpenters, the builders' house, in the land of Pennsylvania, on the seventh day of the ninth month, with their coaches, their chariots, their camels, their horsemen and their servants, a great multitude, and they communed together."

Thus, even from the clouds of steam rising out of the political teapot in America, there emerges the august figure of the first Continental Congress, which assembled in Carpenters' Hall, Philadelphia, in September, 1774, and which then and there began on behalf of the American people a general government that, under varying forms and with gradually increasing strength, has lasted among us, without one break in its continuity, till the present hour. Indeed, the chief moral of this humorous chronicle of the American tea-troubles, is that of the necessity and the beneficence of American political Union. In the midst of all their dangers and sufferings, as we are here told, "the men of Boston waited patiently the event, for they put their trust in the Lord of Hosts, in the Congress, in themselves, and in Occuncocogeecocacheecacheecadungo; for they said—Two is better than one, and a fourfold cord is not easily broken."

CHAPTER XII.

THE SUMMONS FOR A GREAT AMERICAN COUNCIL: MAY–SEPTEMBER, 1774.

I.—The critical character of the year 1774 in the development of the Revolution—Marks a change in the process of governmental discipline of the colonies—Expectation that the colonies would succumb to the pressure thus laid upon them.

II.—Action of Boston at the news of the port-bill—The response of the twelve colonies to Massachusetts—The summons for the first Continental Congress.

III.—A fresh outburst of political literature immediately prior to the meeting of the Congress—Josiah Quincy's "Observations on the Boston Port-Bill"—James Wilson's "Considerations on the Nature and Extent of the Legislative Authority of the British Parliament."

IV.—"A Few Political Reflections Submitted to the Consideration of the British Colonies, by a Citizen of Philadelphia"—Demands that American opposition should be legal and rational—Anticipates two prominent arguments of Thomas Paine.

V.—The fundamental theory of American opposition challenged in "A Letter from a Virginian to the Members of the Congress"—Taxation and government are inseparable—This writer blames his fellow colonists for their political fickleness and inconsistency—He denounces the proposal for non-importation and non-consumption.

VI.—The assembling of the first Continental Congress—Their meeting is simultaneous with the publication of "A Pretty Story" by Peter Grievous, Esq.—The invitation of the preface.

VII.—Outline of "A Pretty Story" as an allegorical history of the business that brought the Congress together—The story teller stops at the point where the Congress takes it up.

VIII.—The literary charm of "A Pretty Story"—Comparison of it with Arbuthnot's "History of John Bull"—Francis Hopkinson, the author of "A Pretty Story," thus takes his place as one of the three leading satirists on the Whig side of the Revolution—The character of his satire as compared with that of Trumbull and Freneau.

I.

No student of our Revolutionary period can afford to hasten past the year 1774,—the year which divides the

entire period into two nearly equal sections. In the deeper meaning of things, this was the most critical year of all the twenty: in it were done the deeds that defined what went before, that predicted what came after. At the beginning of that year, it could not certainly be known from any outward fact, that the one party or the other in the great dispute would not finally give way in time to avert the clash which might produce civil war, the disruption of one English empire, the appearance in its place of two. By the end of that year, events had occurred which made it certain that no essential claim of either party was to be withdrawn; consequently, that the claims of both, being irreconcilable, were also to be pressed to their ultimate issue. In that ultimate issue was included every action and passion of American experience down to the Peace of 1783.

Of course, scarcely any other chapter of history is more familiar to us than the record of this critical year. For the purpose now before us, all that is needed is that, having in mind the salient items of that record, we fail not to note their fresh and tremendous significance as we adjust them to our present point of view.

In all the windings of the controversy during the previous ten years, a certain threefold process had been uniform: first, parliamentary encroachment, then colonial resistance, then parliamentary concession. Will this third term in the process be once more repeated, when, in March, 1774, parliament shall learn of the obstreperous transactions in Boston harbor three months before? If, indeed, under such circumstances, that third term shall be repeated, then any onlooker may foresee that the subsequent decade is not to be essentially different from the previous one. If, however, instead of parliamentary concession, at last shall be substituted parliamentary firmness—an unflinching refusal to concede anything—and if with this shall go its logical adjunct —coercion—then, also, any onlooker may foresee that the subsequent decade is to develop lines of public experience startlingly unlike those which had gone before: either the

colonies themselves will yield,—which, indeed, would be something very new,—or the dispute will become a Revolution.

Here, then, in 1774, we mark the point of change in the fatal third term of the process of governmental discipline. Instead of yielding any portion of the policy which had provoked colonial resistance, parliament stood by that policy without flinching, and at once provided for its vindication by four measures of appalling force: the act for closing the port of Boston, the act for exterminating every trace of self-government in Massachusetts, the act for removing to Great Britain for trial any person indicted in Massachusetts for a capital offense, and the act for preventing the colonists south of the St. Lawrence from finding, in their future measures of resistance, allies in the colonists north of that boundary. Still further to indicate the thoroughness of this scheme for stamping out sedition in Massachusetts, its governor, a civilian, was withdrawn, and in his stead was sent there as governor, the commander-in-chief of all the royal forces in America. Thenceforward, the rough murmurings of American discontent were to be met by the frank and simple policy of blood and iron.

What will be the response of the Americans to all this simplicity and frankness? In the presence of so tremendous a display of imperial firmness and force, will not the several colonies be terrorized? And, in their terror, will they not remain politically separated as hitherto? And in their political separation, will they not think each of its own safety only, and thus, one by one, succumb to a power so vastly beyond their ability to cope with? That such would be the effects of the new colonial policy as pushed through the two houses in the spring of 1774, was the confident prediction of the king, of the ministry, of the entire court party, in and out of parliament. What actually happened in America merely proved them to be bad prophets, and worse politicians.

II.

The Boston port-bill—the first of the four great measures then in contemplation—received the royal assent on the 31st of March. The news of that fact reached the doomed city on the 10th of May. On the 13th of May, arrived the new governor, General Gage. Even while he was sailing up the harbor, the people of Boston, in town-meeting assembled, voted that the act of parliament to which their good king had just given his assent, was one of "impolicy, injustice, inhumanity, and cruelty"; against it they made solemn appeal "to God and the world"; and they called upon the other colonies not to suffer the colony of Massachusetts to contend alone against a power which, if it should first crush that colony, would be able the more easily to crush all the rest.[1]

By the other colonies, this invocation from Massachusetts was scarcely needed: they were not so obtuse as to be unable of themselves to perceive their own concern in the Boston port-bill. Indeed, the mere arrival within their borders of printed copies of that act, had produced everywhere an effect even profounder and more impassioned than that produced by the Stamp Act nine years before. Of the greatness of the danger which then menaced them, they were fully aware; but, instead of terror, was fearless resolve, instead of the blind selfishness of localism and the imbecility of divided councils, was an almost universal demand for political union. Even those Americans—and there were many—who thought that American opposition had already gone too far, could easily see that the time had come for them all to try, at any rate, to think and act together. Almost at one breath, therefore, from the twelve other colonies went back the word to Massachusetts, that the cause of one was the cause of all, and that on behalf of all must be immediately summoned a great American council, to consider and to announce a common course of action in

[1] W. Gordon, "History," etc., i. 361; W. V. Wells, "Life of Samuel Adams," ii. 161–164.

the presence of a common danger. This was the call—almost a simultaneous one—which brought to Philadelphia, in September, 1774, the first Continental Congress.

III.

These events, of course, were the signal for a fresh outburst of political literature among us. Within the two or three months prior to the meeting of the Congress, the colonial newspapers teemed and glowed with essays touching the business upon which that body was to deliberate; and these, with the host of political pamphlets then separately issued, discussed with a new intensity the arduous and tragic character of the responsibilities thus thrown upon the American people. Even the men who thought alike as to the injustice and the dangerousness of the new measures of the government, were by no means able to think alike as to the most proper and most politic method of dealing with them. The need, at any rate, of a general American Congress; the right to have such a Congress, even though no express permission to that effect was to be found in any constitutional document; above all, the claims which the Congress should promulgate on behalf of the colonies, and the line of action it should recommend in support of those claims,—such were then the great matters under consideration. Even American jocularity—that inextinguishable resource of this people in times of storm and gloom—seems then to have been almost chastened by the pathos of the situation.

Of the various writings which sprang into life from the midst of these excitements, one of the earliest and one of the most significant was a pamphlet published in Boston in May, 1774, and bearing this title: "Observations on the Act of Parliament commonly called the Boston Port-Bill; with Thoughts on Civil Society and Standing Armies." [1]

[1] Reprinted in "Memoir of the Life of Josiah Quincy, of Massachusetts Bay: 1744–1775. By his Son Josiah Quincy, Jr.," 293–376. The dedication is

Its author, who did not here conform to the common usage of anonymous publication, was Josiah Quincy, a well-educated, brilliant, and high-mettled lawyer of Boston, then but thirty years old, already frail from pulmonary disease, and destined to death from that cause in less than a twelve-month thereafter. As if conscious of his fate, he often permits to himself in this pamphlet a hectic intensity of style, which, also, reflects a local habit of that period in its occasional spasms of grandiloquence and in its tiresome repetitions of Greek and Roman commonplaces. There is, however, nothing hectic, nothing rhetorical, in the courage which prompts him to put his name openly upon the title-page of a tract that was not unlikely to bring him to the scaffold:[1] "Legislators who could condemn a whole town unheard, nay, uncited to answer; who could involve thousands in ruin and misery, without suggestion of any crime by them committed; and who could so construct their law as that enormous pains and penalties would inevitably ensue, notwithstanding the most perfect obedience to its injunctions, . . . would undoubtedly imagine the attainder and death of a private individual, for his public animadversions, a less extraordinary act of power. But all exertions of duty have their hazard. . . . He who shall go about to treat of important and perilous concerns, and conceals himself behind the curtain of a feigned signature, gives an advantage to his adversaries, who will not fail to stigmatize his thoughts as the notions of an unknown writer, afraid or ashamed to avow his sentiments; and hence they are deemed unworthy of notice and refutation. Therefore I give the world both my sentiments and my name on the

dated Boston, May 14, 1774, only four days after the reception there of the news of the passage of the bill discussed by him. The pamphlet is of great length, and in some parts gives evidence of considerable reading, as well as of some care in writing. Much of it, doubtless, had been written before the immediate occasion which brought it to light,—the author using the excitement produced by the port-bill as a tide on which to float his "Thoughts on Civil Society and Standing Armies."

[1] "Memoir of Josiah Quincy," 130–136.

present occasion."[1] As to the political virtues which in that trying hour were most needed by his countrymen, he writes with a solemnity not at all artificial, even if it be somewhat grandiose: "To divide and conquer was the maxim of the devil in the garden of Eden, and to disunite and enslave hath been the principle of all his votaries from that period to the present. . . . The combinations of public robbers ought, therefore, to cement patriots and heroes; and, as the former plot and conspire to undermine and destroy the commonwealth, the latter ought to form a compact for opposition,—a band of vengeance."[2]

In broad contrast to the somewhat febrile intensity of Quincy's pamphlet, is the quiet tone of a pamphlet published anonymously at Philadelphia a few weeks later, and entitled "Considerations on the Nature and Extent of the Legislative Authority of the British Parliament,"[3] wherein, with great learning and with great acumen, as well as with perfect sobriety, the author seeks to influence the policy of the approaching Congress by an argument in support of the constitutional paradox that the American colonies were bound to the empire only through their allegiance to the British crown, and consequently were beyond the legislative authority of parliament. Its author was James Wilson, a lawyer of Philadelphia, at that time but thirty-two years old, a Scotsman bred at St. Andrew's, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, an accomplished and a courageous politician, then on the threshold of a great career in the higher walks of American statesmanship.[4]

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[1] "Observations," etc., 299–301 of reprint in "Memoir." [2] Ibid. 372.

[3] Reprinted in the Works of James Wilson, iii. 199–246.

[4] The case of this man would serve to point a moral or adorn a tale as to the caprice which seems to direct the distribution of fame in this world. Among the men who founded the Republic, and especially among those who created and shaped our national constitution, James Wilson stood in his lifetime in the front rank with John Dickinson and John Jay, with Hamilton and Madison; yet during the present century his name has fallen into something like oblivion. There are some tokens that such oblivion is not always to last; one being the recent call for a new edition of his works, which, edited by James deWitt Andrews, was published in two volumes in Chicago in 1896.

IV.

Between the eleventh of June and the fourth of August, 1774, the dominant topic was discussed in the "Pennsylvania Packet" in a series of six essays, which drew upon themselves so much attention that a collected edition of them had then to be struck off. The pamphlet as thus formed was called "A Few Political Reflections Submitted to the Consideration of the British Colonies, by a Citizen of Philadelphia."[1] The uncommon quality of this writer is shown in the fearless manner in which, while approving of the universal rejection of the tax-claim of parliament, he dares to demand that all measures of opposition shall be both lawful and rational.

To begin with, he plants himself squarely upon the proposition that that claim is "so unjust, so unnatural and absurd," that all Americans must unite to oppose it, and that in such opposition, if wisely conducted, they will have the sympathy and support of multitudes of good people in England.[2] The propriety, the necessity, of opposing this tax-claim, then, is admitted; only as to the manner of opposing it, can there be a doubt.

One form of opposition—that through civil war—should be at once and forever discarded: "The 'ultima ratio,' to oppose force to force, is what the heart of every American must revolt at. For with whom should we engage? Our friends—our countrymen—our kindred! No! Let not the profligacy of a ministry abandoned to every principle of virtue and raging for despotism, tempt such near and dear connections to sheathe the sword in each other's bowels. There are surer, safer, means to end the controversy."[3]

And as he would reject the remedy through war, so

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[1] The copy used by me—the only one that I have ever met with—belongs to the Library Company of Philadelphia. On the fly-leaf is a manuscript note apparently by the late Mr. Lloyd Smith, attributing the authorship of the pamphlet to Richard Wells.

[2] "A Few Political Reflections," 3. [3] Ibid. 3–4.

would he reject the remedy through mere riot and the wanton destruction of property; and in order to atone for some recent lapses of that kind, he would promptly compensate the East India Company for its pecuniary losses at our hands.

The true remedy, in his opinion, is to be found among the resources of legitimate and honorable commerce. Here, also, there is one resource which, though in itself just, is not wise—that of an agreement for non-exportation; for, just in proportion as we are faithful to it, we merely hurt ourselves. Nevertheless, the true remedy is a commercial one: it is a general agreement for non-importation, which, if honestly adhered to, would break neither the law nor the peace, and would, in due time, compel the ministers either to give up their policy or to go out of office.

This pamphlet has additional interest for us, as developing, on behalf of a larger and freer political life in America, two striking arguments which, eighteen months afterward, were repeated with brilliant amplification by Thomas Paine. One is the argument from our political maturity: the other is the argument from our greatness in territory and in population. Americans, it is here argued, are no longer political infants; they have reached their political majority; the time has come for them to be clothed with all its appropriate rights and duties: "We look to manhood; our muscles swell with youthful vigor; our sinews spring with elastic force, and we feel the marrow of Englishmen in our bones. The day of independent manhood is at hand. . . . In domestic life, we all allow, there is a time when youth shall no longer be subject to the control of age."[1] Finally, in demanding that American greatness in territory and in population should be accepted as having its due weight against any further minute or severe control over us by England, he predicts the ultimate and peaceful transfer to America of the seat of the British empire,—his words to this effect being a sort of prose version of Dean Berkeley's earlier pre-

[1] "A Few Political Reflections," 33–34.

diction in verse: "George the First, when called to the throne of England, never harbored so absurd a thought as to wield the English sceptre in the Electorate of Hanover. The centre of his dominion was the place of his choice; nor would the nation have been satisfied without it. How long it may be before a similar translation shall happen in favor of America, I will not undertake to determine. But, should the Georges in regular succession wear the British diadem to a number ranking with the Louises of France, many a goodly prince of that royal line will have mingled his ashes with American dust; and not many generations may pass away, before one of the first monarchs of the world, ascending his throne, shall declare with exulting joy,—'Born and educated amongst you, I glory in the name of American!'"[1]

V.

We should be only misleading ourselves into a morass of historical error, if we were to overlook the fact that in this season of alarm and of earnest consultation, there were many patriotic Americans who gravely challenged the wisdom, even the rectitude, of the chief measures of opposition which, by so many writers, were already pressed upon the attention of the Congress in advance of its meeting. Perhaps the most characteristic example of this political attitude is furnished by a pamphlet, admirable in temper and expression, entitled "A Letter from a Virginian to the Members of the Congress to be held at Philadelphia on the First of September, 1774."[2]

The solicitude of this writer has its deepest root in his own distrust of the soundness of the constitutional theory on which most of the colonial opposition proceeds. That

[1] "A Few Political Reflections," 49.

[2] The great impression made by this pamphlet is proved by the numerous reprints of it which were made in spite of the fact that its argument was dead against what appeared to be the popular current. Some copies of it are without place of publication. It was probably first printed at Philadelphia. I am using a Boston reprint of 1774.

the measures of the ministry are impolitic and ought to be withdrawn, he nowhere denies,—but are they unconstitutional? "We may ring eternal changes upon taxation and representation; . . . but there is one proposition, a self-evident proposition, to which all the world give their assent, and from which we cannot withhold ours,—that, whatever taxation and representation may be, taxation and government are inseparable."[1]

Granted that the ministerial measures to which we object, do entail hardship and are justly offensive, what course ought we to pursue to obtain their repeal? For one thing, we ought to pursue a consistent course—a thing we have not been doing the past ten years. And is this long record of our political inconsistency to be extended? "Shall we, Proteus-like, perpetually change our ground, assume every moment some new and strange shape, to defend, to evade? Shall we establish distinctions between internal and external taxation one year, and laugh at them the next? Shall we confound duties with taxes, and regulations of trade with revenue laws? Shall we rave against the preamble of the law, while we are ready to admit the enacting part of it? Shall we refuse to obey the tea act, not as an oppressive act, but as a dangerous, a sole precedent of taxation, when every post day shows a precedent which our forefathers submitted to, and which we still submit to, without murmuring? Shall we move heaven and earth against a trifling duty, on a luxury unknown to nine-tenths of the globe, unknown to our ancestors, despised by half the nations of Europe, which no authority, no necessity, compels us to use?"[2]

Furthermore, we shall miss the right way for securing the repeal of measures to which we object, if we adopt any plan for merely vexing and distressing the mother country, as that of non-importation and non-consumption: "Beware how you adopt that measure, how you engage in that strange conflict of sullenness and obstinacy, till you have

[1] "A Letter from a Virginian," etc., 26. [2] Ibid. 22–23.

given it the most calm and serious deliberation."[1] "We may tease the mother country; we cannot ruin her."[2] "No man of spirit in private life, even on the slightest quarrel, will submit to be bullied, and exposed to the scorn and derision of the little circle he lives in. Can we seriously hope that a great nation, a proud nation, will be insulted and degraded with impunity by her colonies, in the face of every rival kingdom in Europe?"[3] Even though our agreement for non-importation and non-consumption should succeed, "it certainly behooves us as men, and as Christians, to be sure that it is a just measure. A combination to ruin or to obstruct the trade of a fellow citizen who happens to differ from us in his religious or political opinions, adopted in passion, prosecuted by the intrigues of a cabal, by innuendoes, insinuations, threatenings, and publicly signed by large numbers of leading men, would, I presume, be a manifest violation of the laws of God and man, and would, on conviction, be severely punished in every court of justice in Christendom. In what colors, then, will appear combinations of a large and respectable body of subjects against the supreme power of the community, adopted from the same motives, prosecuted by the same arts, and publicly signed in the face of the whole world?"[4] "For the sake of common humanity, gentlemen, disdain to co-operate with handbills, with newspapers, with the high menacing resolves of common town-meetings. Do not conspire with them, to reduce, under the pains and penalties of disgrace and infamy, thousands of your fellow citizens to the cruel alternative of involving themselves, their wives and children, in indigence and wretchedness, or of being publicly branded and pointed out by the frantic multitude as apostates and traitors to their country."[5]

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[1] "A Letter from a Virginian," etc., 18–19. [2] Ibid. 20.

[3] Ibid. 25. [4] Ibid. 20–21.

[5] Ibid. 22. I do not remember to have met with any suggestion as to the authorship of this able pamphlet; but from its tone both of thought and of expression, I am inclined to attribute it to Jonathan Boucher.

VI.

On Monday morning, the fifth of September, 1774, four-and-forty respectable gentlemen, mostly strangers to one another, but representing twelve "colonies and provinces in North America," quietly made their way into Carpenters' Hall, in Philadelphia, and there sitting down together began "to consult upon the present state of the colonies, and the miseries to which they are and must be reduced, by the operation of certain acts of parliament respecting America, and to deliberate and determine upon wise and proper measures to be by them recommended to all the colonies, for the recovery and establishment of their just rights and liberties, civil and religious, and the restoration of union and harmony between Great Britain and the colonies, most ardently desired by all good men."[1] Thus came into life the first Continental Congress, and with it the permanent political union of the American people. As to the task set before those four-and-forty gentlemen, no graver one was ever undertaken since the world began.

As they came out from that hall of anxious deliberation, some of them may have found, on stepping into Mr. John Dunlap's shop not far away, a lively-looking little book, just come from the printer's hands, in which book, under the veil of playful allegory, they could read in a few minutes a graphic and indeed a quite tremendous history of the very events that had brought them together in that place:

A
PRETTY STORY
written in the
YEAR OF OUR LORD 1774,
By
PETER GRIEVOUS, ESQ.,
A.B.C.D.E.
Veluti in Speculo.
PHILADELPHIA.
Printed and sold by John Dunlap.
M. DCC. LXXIV.

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[1] "Journals of Congress," i. 1–2.

As this title-page,[1] however, gave no clew to the real import of the book, the reader who should then seek for such clew in the preface, would find himself there decoyed and led on by explanations which still failed to give him warning that he was about to peruse a tractate upon Anglo-American politics. "A book," gaily remarks Peter Grievous, with the nonchalant air of a mere story-teller unvexed by things political, "is like a house. The grand portico is the Dedication; the flagged pavement is an Humble Address to the Reader, in order to pave the way for a kind reception of the work; the front door with its fluted pillars, pediment, trigliffs, and modillons, are the Title-page, with its motto, author's name and titles, date of the year, etc.; the entry is the Preface—oftentimes of a tedious length; and the several apartments and closets are the Chapters and Sections of the work itself. As I am but a clumsy carpenter at best, I shall not attempt to decorate my little cottage with any out-of-door ornaments; but as it would be inconvenient and uncomfortable to have my front door open immediately into the apartments of the house, I have made this Preface by way of entry.

"And now, gentle reader, if you should think my entry too plain and simple, you may set your imagination to work, and furnish it with a grand staircase, with cornices, stucco, and paintings. That is, you may suppose that I entered very unwillingly upon this work, being compelled to it by a chain of unforeseen circumstances; that it was written in the midst of a great hurry of other business, and under particular disadvantages of time and place, and that it was only intended for the inspection of a few friends, without any expectations of ever seeing it in the press.

[1] In my citations from "A Pretty Story," I have used the edition by B. J. Lossing, published in N. Y., in 1864, under the outside title of "The Old Farm and the New Farm: A Political Allegory." Lossing professes to give an exact reprint of the original edition; while the copy to be found in Hopkinson's "Miscellaneous Essays," i. 65–91, was more or less tampered with and weakened by himself, in his preparation of it for what proved to be the posthumous publication of his writings.

You may, kind reader, go on to suppose that when my friends perused my work, they were struck with the energy of my genius, and insisted that the public ought not to be deprived of such a fund of amusement and improvement through my obstinate modesty; and that, after many solicitations and powerful persuasions, I had been prevailed upon to bless mankind with the fruits of my labor. Or, if you like not this, you may suppose that the following sheets were found in the cabinet of some deceased gentleman; or that they were dug out of an ancient ruin, or discovered in a hermit's cave, or dropped from the clouds in a hail storm. In short, you may suppose just what you please. And when, by the help of imagination, you have seasoned the Preface to your palate, you may turn over this leaf, and feast upon the body of the work itself."

VII.

Turning over the leaf, then, in obedience to such persuasion, the reader would soon be in full sail upon a current of rapid and fascinating narrative in which, under the names of the Old Farm for England, and the New Farm for America, the troubled relations between the two, especially for the ten or twelve years prior to 1774, are depicted in a very amusing way, and through which, especially, there runs a vein of delicate raillery and satire upon the entire spirit and method of the masters of the Old Farm in their dealing with the settlers of the New. It was the whole case, then to be considered with so much solemnity by the first Continental Congress, set forth logically and laughably in a good-humored little story,—which no one could fail to read to the end who should once begin it.

"Once upon a time, a great while ago, there lived a certain Nobleman, who had long possessed a very valuable Farm, and had a great number of children and grandchildren. Besides the annual profits of his land, which were very considerable, he kept a large shop of goods; and being

very successful in trade, he became, in process of time, exceeding rich and powerful, insomuch that all his neighbors feared and respected him. With respect to the management of his family, it was thought he had adopted the most perfect mode that could be devised; for he had been at the pains to examine the economy of all his neighbors, and had selected from their plans all such parts as appeared to be equitable and beneficial, and omitted those which from experience were found to be inconvenient. Or, rather, by blending their several constitutions together, he had so ingeniously counterbalanced the evils of one mode of government with the benefits of another, that the advantages were richly enjoyed, and inconveniences scarcely felt. In short, his family was thought to be the best ordered of any in his neighborhood."[1] "Now it came to pass that this Nobleman had, by some means or other, obtained a right to an immense tract of wild uncultivated country at a vast distance from his mansion house. But he set little store by this acquisition, as it yielded him no profit; nor was it likely to do so, being not only difficult of access on account of the distance, but was also overrun with innumerable wild beasts[2] very fierce and savage,—so that it would be extremely dangerous to attempt taking possession of it.

"In process of time, however, some of his children, more stout and enterprising than the rest, requested leave of their Father to go and settle on this distant tract of land. Leave was readily obtained; but before they set out, certain agreements were stipulated between them. The principal were —the old Gentleman, on his part, engaged to protect and defend the adventurers in their new settlements; to assist them in chasing away the wild beasts; and to extend to them all the benefits of the government under which they were born,—assuring them that although they should be removed so far from his presence, they should nevertheless be considered as the children of his family, and treated accordingly. At the same time, he gave each of them a

[1] "A Pretty Story," 13–14. [2] Particularly, the American Indians.

bond for the faithful performance of these promises, in which, among other things, it was covenanted that they should each of them, in their several families, have a liberty of making such rules and regulations for their own good government as they should find convenient, provided the rules and regulations should not contradict or be inconsistent with the general standing orders established in his Farm. In return for these favors, he insisted that they, on their parts, should at all times acknowledge him to be their Father; that they should not deal with their neighbors without his leave, but send to his shop only for such merchandise as they should want.[1] But, in order to enable them to pay for such goods as they should purchase, they were permitted to sell the product of their lands to certain of his neighbors."[2]

Having duly adjusted all these preliminaries, the hardy sons of the old Nobleman set off on their journey. After dangers and hardships almost without number, they at last got comfortably settled on the New Farm; in due time their harvests became abundant; and, keeping up a constant correspondence with the family on the Old Farm, they went to great expense for wagons, horses, and drivers, with which to bring from their Father's shop such goods as they wanted, which they paid for out of the produce of their lands. Thus matters went on very happily until, in an evil day, the old Nobleman's Wife[3] "began to cast an avaricious eye upon the new settlers." In the first place, she issued "an edict setting forth that, whereas the tailors of her family were greatly injured by the people of the New Farm, inasmuch as they presumed to make their own clothes, whereby the said tailors were deprived of the benefit of their custom, it was therefore ordained that for the future, the new settlers should not be permitted to have

[1] The Navigation Acts.

[2] "A Pretty Story," 19–21.

[3] The Nobleman's Wife is, of course, the British Parliament. In Arbuthnot's "History of John Bull," also, John Bull's Wife is Parliament.

amongst them any shears or scissors larger than a certain fixed size.[1] In consequence of this, our adventurers were compelled to have their clothes made by their Father's tailors ; but out of regard to the old Gentleman, they patiently submitted to this grievance."[2] Next, she proceeded to lay heavy taxes upon them on various pretences, all the time "receiving the fruits of their industry with both hands. Moreover, she persuaded her Husband to send amongst them, from time to time, a number of the most lazy and useless of his servants, under the specious pretext of defending them in their settlements, and of assisting to destroy the wild beasts, but in fact, to rid his own house of their company, not having employment for them, and at the same time to be a watch and a check upon the people of the New Farm."[3]

As the old Nobleman advanced in years, he came to leave his affairs more and more in the hands of his Steward, who was a very bad man, and had debauched the old Nobleman's Wife,[4] "and by that means gained an entire ascendency over her. She no longer deliberated what would most benefit either the Old Farm or the New, but said and did whatever the Steward pleased. Nay, so much was she influ-

[1] For example, no hat maker in America was allowed to have more than two apprentices, or to teach his trade to a negro, or to export his products by loading them on any horse, ass, cart, or sailing vessel whatsoever. All iron manufacture in the colonies was particularly obnoxious. An act was passed by the house of commons, but did not go into effect, whereby no American blacksmith might make so much as a bolt, or spike, or nail ; but later, parliament actually "forbade under penalties the maintaining of iron mills, slitting or rolling mills, plating forges, and steel furnaces in the colonies," "Encyc. Brit.," xxiii. 733. "England made it a fixed maxim of her commercial policy to crush every rising industry in her colonies, that could possibly compete with the home market." Lecky, "A History of England in the 18th Century," ii. 240. "It is to the antagonism of interests" created by such laws, "much more than to the Stamp Act or to any isolated instances of misgovernment, that the subsequent disruption must be ascribed." Ibid. 241.

[2] "A Pretty Story," 26–27.

[3] Ibid. 27–28.

[4] The corruption of parliament by ministerial bribes in the form of money, office, titles, etc.

enced by him, that she could neither utter Aye or No but as he directed. For he had cunningly persuaded her that it was very fashionable for women to wear padlocks on their lips, and that he was sure they would become her exceedingly. He therefore fastened a padlock to each corner of her mouth. When the one was open, she could only say Aye; and when the other was loosed, could only cry No. He took care to keep the keys of these locks himself; so that her will became entirely subject to his power." [1]

Thus, the wicked Steward with the help of the debauched Old Lady was able to work his will against the people of the New Farm, devising all sorts of "ways and means to impoverish and distress them." For one thing, he got the old Nobleman to sign an edict against the new settlers, in which it was declared that it was their duty as children to pay something towards supplying their Father's table with provisions, and to the supporting the dignity of his family.[2] For that purpose, it was ordained [3] that all their spoons, knives and forks, plates and porringers, should be marked with a certain mark, by officers appointed for that end; for which marking, they were to pay a certain stipend; and that they should not, under severe penalties, presume to make use of any spoon, knife or fork, plate or porringer, before it had been so marked, and the said stipend paid to the officer." [4] The attempt to put this edict in force led to a vast amount of trouble both in the Old Farm and in the New, so that at last the Nobleman thought it best to revoke it,[5] though he did this with a very bad grace.[6] Of course, "the Steward continued to hate the new settlers with exceeding great hatred, and determined to renew his attack

[1] "A Pretty Story," 30–31.

[2] In 1764, duties were laid on the colonies for the first time for the avowed purpose of increasing the imperial revenue.

[3] The Stamp Act, 1765.

[4] "A Pretty Story," 31–32.

[5] Repeal of the Stamp Act, 1766.

[6] The Declaratory Resolution asserting the power of parliament to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever.

upon their peace and happiness."[1] Accordingly, he caused to be proclaimed another decree,[2] to the effect "that the new settlers should pay a certain stipend upon particular goods, which they were not allowed to purchase anywhere but at their Father's shop."[3] Of these goods, the most important was Water-Gruel, of which the new settlers were very fond. Thereupon, they made such a commotion that the Old Nobleman thought it necessary to repeal this decree,[4] only retaining that portion of it which laid a stipend on Water-Gruel, and this merely for the purpose of showing that he had the power to do so. Then followed worse troubles than before. For, the new settlers agreed with one another that so long as the tax on Water-Gruel should remain, they would drink no Water-Gruel, and would thus cause the Water-Gruel business to be unprofitable to the Great Merchants[5] in the Old Farm, who had it for sale. Accordingly, these Great Merchants lifted up their voices and wept, because innumerable casks of the commodity were lying unsold in their warehouses. Whereupon the wicked Steward directed them to load many and great wagons with these casks of Water-Gruel,[6] and send them to the New Farm for sale at a price so low that the settlers would be tempted to violate their agreement,—he "promising that the accustomed duty which they paid for their exclusive right, should be taken off from all the Gruel they should send amongst the new settlers; and that in case their cargoes should come to any damage, he would take care that the loss should be repaired out of the old Gentleman's coffers."[7] When, however, the people saw the wagons

[1] "A Pretty Story," 38.

[2] The act introduced by Charles Townshend in 1767, laying duties on paper, painters' colors, glass, and tea.

[3] "A Pretty Story," 39.

[4] The bill introduced by Lord North, 5 March, 1770, repealing that part of the act of 1767 which laid a duty on paper, painters' colors, and glass, but retaining the duty on tea in order to maintain the parliamentary right of taxation.

[5] The East India Company.

[6] Lord North's bill, in 1773, authorizing the East India Co. to send their commodity to America free of export duty.

[7] "A Pretty Story," 42.

of Water-Gruel approaching, they "were again thrown into great alarms and confusions. Some of them would not suffer the waggons to be unloaded at all, but sent them immediately back to the Gruel Merchants.[1] Others permitted the waggons to unload, but would not touch the hateful commodity; so that it lay neglected about their roads and highways until it grew sour and spoiled.[2] But one of the new settlers, whose name was Jack,[3] either from a keener sense of the injuries attempted against him, or from the necessity of his situation, which was such that he could not send back the Gruel because of a number of mercenaries[4] whom his Father had stationed before his house to watch, and be a check upon his conduct,—he, I say, being almost driven to despair, fell to work, and with great zeal stove to pieces the casks of Gruel, which had been sent him, and utterly demolished the whole cargo." [5]

Of course, as soon as these high doings were known at the Old Farm, "great and terrible was the uproar there. The old Gentleman fell into great wrath, declaring that his absent children meant to throw off all dependence upon him, and to become altogether disobedient. His Wife, also, tore the padlocks from her lips, and raved and stormed like a billingsgate. The Steward lost all patience and moderation, swearing most profanely that he would leave no stone unturned until he had humbled the settlers of the New Farm at his feet,[6] and caused their Father to trample on their necks. Moreover, the Gruel Merchants roared and bellowed for the loss of their Gruel; and the clerks and

[1] The tea ships were sent back from New York and Philadelphia.

[2] At Charleston the tea was landed, but placed in damp cellars where it spoiled.

[3] Boston.

[4] British soldiers and vessels of war in Boston harbor.

[5] Pages 44–45.

[6] A reverberation of Lord North's too-well-remembered speech in the house of commons in 1768: "I am against repealing the last act of parliament, securing to us a revenue out of America; I will never think of repealing it until we see America prostrate at our feet."

apprentices were in the utmost consternation lest the people of the New Farm should again agree to have no dealings with their Father's shop. Vengeance was immediately set on foot, particularly against Jack." For that purpose, a large padlock was prepared, which was "to be fastened upon Jack's great gate,"[1] and this was not to be opened again until Jack had paid for the Gruel he had spilt, and had shown other signs of repentance. Moreover, "a large gallows was erected before the mansion house in the Old Farm, and an order made that if any of Jack's children or servants should be suspected of misbehavior, they should not be convicted or acquitted by the consent of their brethren, . . . but be tied neck and heels and dragged to the gallows at the mansion house, and there be hanged without mercy."[2]

Certainly, all this was dreadful for poor Jack. "The great inlet to his farm was entirely blocked up, so that he could neither carry out the produce of his land for sale, nor receive from abroad the necessaries for his family. But this was not all. His Father, along with the padlock aforesaid, had sent an Overseer[3] to hector and domineer over him and his family, and to endeavor to break his spirit by exercising every possible severity; for which purpose, he was attended by a great number of mercenaries, and armed with more than common authorities."[4] On the arrival of the Overseer, Jack and his family received him with all due respect;[5] "for, notwithstanding all that had passed, the people of the new Settlements loved and revered the old Gentleman with a truly filial attachment,—attributing his unkindness

[1] The Boston port bill, 1774.

[2] Pages 45, 46, 47.

[3] General Gage, to whom was given extraordinary powers. He arrived at Boston, May, 1774, bringing four additional regiments.

[4] Page 48.

[5] General Gage "landed at Long Wharf, amid salutes from ships and batteries. Received by the council and civil officers, he was escorted by the Boston cadets, whom Hancock commanded, to the state house, where the council presented a loyal address. . . . He then partook of a public dinner in Faneuil Hall." Bancroft, "Hist. of U. S.," last rev., iv. 7–8.

entirely to the intrigues of their enemy, the Steward. But this fair weather did not last long. The new Overseer took the first opportunity of showing that he had no intentions of living in harmony and friendship with the family. Some of Jack's domestics had put on their Sunday clothes, and attended the Overseer in the great parlor, in order to pay him their compliments on his arrival, and to request his assistance in reconciling them to their Father; but he rudely stopped them short in the midst of their speech, called them a parcel of disobedient scoundrels, and bid them go about their business. So saying, he turned upon his heel, and with great contempt left the room." [1]

In the midst of these troubles, poor Jack turned for help to the other Families on the New Farm. The latter promptly and kindly assured Jack and his family that in their opinion the cause of one was the cause of all,—adding that "they would stand by and support them to the last." But, above all, they "earnestly recommended it to them to be firm and steady in the cause of liberty and justice, and never acknowledge the omnipotence of their Mother-in-Law, nor yield to the machinations of their enemy, the Steward. In the meantime, lest Jack's family should suffer for want of necessaries, their great gate being fast locked, liberal and very generous contributions were raised among the several Families of the new Settlements for their present relief. This seasonable bounty was handed to Jack over the garden wall, all access to the front of his house being shut up." [2]

All these proceedings only the more provoked the hard-fisted Overseer, who, observing "that the children and domestics of Jack's Family had frequent meetings and consultations together, sometimes in the garret, and sometimes in the stable, . . . he wrôte a thundering prohibition, much like a Pope's Bull, which he caused to be pasted up in every room in the house; in which he declared and protested that these meetings were treasonable, traitorous, and rebel-

[1] Pages 48–49.

[2] Page 51.

lious, contrary to the dignity of their Father, and inconsistent with the omnipotence of their Mother-in-Law; denouncing, also, terrible punishments against any two of the Family who should from thenceforth be seen whispering together, and strictly forbidding the domestics to hold any more meetings in the garret or stable.

"These harsh and unconstitutional proceedings irritated Jack and the other inhabitants of the New Farm to such a degree that . . .

Cætera desunt."[1]

In other words, Peter Grievous is an historian and not a prophet; and having brought the record down to the point at which the older members of the several Families on the New Farm have met together in the hall of the Carpenters, at Philadelphia, there to make common cause with poor Jack, and for him and with him to think out wisely what is further to be done by them all in their common troubles, the author very properly leaves it to these wise gentlemen to finish the "Pretty Story" in their own way, and in doing so to decide whether it shall really turn out to be, upon the whole, a pretty story or not.

VIII.

To any one in the least degree familiar with the problems which convulsed the American colonies in the year 1774, when the troubles growing out of the tea tax had culminated in the closing of the harbor at Boston and in the opening of the Congress at Philadelphia, even a glance over this little book will show that here at last was a writer, enlisted in the colonial cause, who was able to defend that cause, and to assail its enemies, with a fine and a very rare weapon—that of humor. The personages included in "A Pretty Story" are few; its topics are simple and palpable,

[1] Pages 51–52.

and even now in but little need of elucidation; the plot and incidents of the fiction travel in the actual footsteps of well-known history; while the aptness, the delicacy, and the humor of the allegory give to the reader the most delightful surprises, and are well sustained to the very end. Indeed, the wit of the author flashes light upon every legal question then at issue; and the stern and even technical debate between the colonies and the motherland is here translated into a piquant and a bewitching novelette. It soon became known that its author was Francis Hopkinson.

Some critic was good enough, at an early day, to launch upon the world the opinion that Hopkinson's "Pretty Story" was closely modelled after Arbuthnot's "History of John Bull"; and this opinion seems to have held its own unchallenged since then, and to have thriven on mere repetition. The truth is, however, that Hopkinson's little book resembles Arbuthnot's in just one particular—it is an example of the use of allegory in the facetious treatment of national or international politics—a use of allegory almost as old as allegory itself; and, besides this, so far as thought, or form, or incident is concerned, there is almost no feature of resemblance between them. It is not to be doubted that Hopkinson had read "The History of John Bull," for he was a loving disciple and a true kinsman of the wits of the age of Queen Anne; yet he might easily have written every word of his own allegory, without ever having read any word of Arbuthnot's.

By this neat and telling bit of work, Hopkinson took his true place as one of the three leading satirists on the Whig side of the American Revolution,—the other two being John Trumbull and Philip Freneau. In the long and passionate controversy in which these three satirists bore so effective a part, each is distinguishable by his own peculiar note. The political satire of Freneau and of Trumbull is, in general, grim, bitter, vehement, unrelenting. Hopkinson's satire is as keen as theirs, but its characteristic note is one of playfulness. They stood forth the wrathful critics

and assailants of the enemy, confronting him with a hot and an honest hatred, and ready to overwhelm him with an acerbity that was fell and pitiless. Hopkinson, on the other hand, was too gentle, too tender-hearted—his personal tone was too full of amenity—for that sort of warfare. A man who, in his private life, had so kindly and gracious a nature as to be able to establish intimate relations with a poor little Ishmaelite of a mouse which, on his taking his seat at table, would steal from its hiding-place and disport itself by him at his meals; or who could so prevail over the distrust and the fugaciousness of a flock of pigeons, that they would wait for him daily in his garden, would flutter around him as he approached, and contend for places on his person, crowding upon his head and shoulders, and even clinging to the slopes of his arms,—such a man was not the one to make use, even against his worst political enemies, of the rancorous and acrid methods of literary strife. As a satirist, therefore, Hopkinson accomplished his effects without bitterness or violence. No one saw more vividly than he what was weak, or despicable, or cruel, in the position and conduct of the enemy; but in exhibiting it, his method was that of good-humored ridicule. Never losing his temper, almost never extreme in emotion or in expression, with an urbanity which kept unfailingly upon his side the sympathies of his readers, he knew how to dash and discomfit the foe with a raillery that was all the more effective because it seemed to spring from the very absurdity of the case, and to be, as Ben Jonson required, "without malice or heat."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PARTY OF THE LOYALISTS AND THEIR LITERATURE.

I.—The slight development of Loyalist literature prior to 1774—The rapid crystallization of political ideas occasioned by the first Continental Congress—In argumentative literature the period of chief Loyalist activity, from 1774 to 1776.

II.—The survival among us of the partisan ideas and prejudices of the Revolutionary controversy—The proper historic attitude toward the problems and parties of any Revolution.

III.—The Loyalist party judged with respect to its size—The Loyalist claim that the promoters of the Revolution were a minority—Opinion of John Adams and Thomas McKean.

IV.—The Loyalists judged with respect to personal value—In general composed of the more conservative section of American society—The proportion of college-bred men among them—Opinion of Anne Grant of Laggan.

V.—The Loyalists judged with respect to the value of their logical position—Complexity and difficulty of the questions involved in the dispute—The old maxim, "No taxation without representation," not necessarily in conflict with the tax claim of parliament—The maxim applauded by George Grenville—According to the historic meaning of the word, the commons of America were represented in the popular branch of the imperial parliament—That this representation was imperfect and unsatisfactory, was not denied—The true remedy was reform of the representation, and not nullification of the laws of parliament, nor secession from the empire—Opinions of experts in constitutional law—The Loyalist reply to the argument of danger from moderate parliamentary taxation.

VI.—The question of Independence kept in abeyance till 1776—Three prevalent errors as to the character and attitude of the Loyalists.

I.

THERE cannot be a more authentic introduction to the Loyalists of our Revolution, than is to be had through an acquaintance with their literature. As we turn over the pages of that literature,—political essays, pamphlets, sermons, songs, satires, epigrams, burlesques, lampoons,—a

literature now having an almost pathetic insignificance as it slumbers under a hundred years of dust and contempt,—perhaps the first notable fact that calls for attention is, that, in point of time, its development lags somewhat behind that of the Revolutionist party, and does not become of much value until within the twelvemonth preceding the Lexington and Concord skirmishes—that is, until about the time of the Congress of 1774.

Of course, from the very beginning of the dispute there had been American writers who, while doubting the wisdom of the colonial policy of the English ministry, likewise doubted the soundness of the constitutional claim set up in opposition to it by many of their American brethren; and, at any rate, deprecated all violent or extreme measures in the assertion of that claim. Nevertheless, during the eight or ten years prior to 1774, it might fairly have been assumed that this Anglo-American dispute was but one of a long series of political disagreements that had broken out, at various times, in John Bull's large and vivacious family, and that this particular dispute would probably run its natural course and come to an end, just as its predecessors had done, without any permanent rupture of the interior relations of the family, and, indeed, to the great advantage of all its members through a clearer definition of those constitutional principles which had enabled them all to live together so long under the same enormous and kindly roof. Not until after the failure of Lord North's clever device for inducing the Americans to take the taxation which they liked so little, along with that cheering beverage which they liked so much, was it necessary for any person to regard the dispute as one of peculiarly deep and tragical import. It was, perhaps, on account of this confidence of theirs in the natural limitations of the problem then vexing the colonies and the mother country, that so many of the ablest conservative writers in America refrained, in that stage of affairs, from engaging very actively in the discussion. Thus it is that we may in a measure explain why, in this contro-

versy, so little part was taken prior to 1774 by the most powerful of all the Loyalist writers,—Daniel Leonard, Joseph Galloway, Samuel Seabury, Jonathan Boucher, and Jonathan Odell.

But with the events of the years 1773 and 1774 came a total change in the situation, and in the attitude of all parties toward it: first, the repulsion of the gentle tea ships by several American communities, and the destruction of valuable property belonging to liegemen of the king; then the series of stern retaliatory measures to which parliament was thereby drawn; finally, by a large portion of the colonists, the fearless summons for a great council of their own delegates, solemnly to determine and to proclaim some common plan of action. With the gathering of this celebrated council — the first Continental Congress — the wayfaring American though a fool could not err in reading, in very crimson letters painted on the air in front of him, the tidings of the arrival of a race-crisis altogether transcending those ordinary political altercations which had from time to time disturbed, and likewise quickened and clarified, the minds of his English ancestors.

Naturally, therefore, from about this time the process of political crystallization among the colonists went on with extraordinary rapidity. Then, every man had to define both to himself and to his neighbor, what he thought, how he felt, what he meant to do. Then, too, the party of insubordination in these thirteen agitated communities had, for the first time, a common and a permanent organ for the formulation of the political doctrine and purpose which should sway them all. Finally, around this official and authoritative statement of doctrine and purpose, the opposing tendencies of thought could clash and do intelligent battle,—having a set of precise propositions to fight for or to fight against, and having, likewise, the grim consciousness that such fight was no longer a merely academic one.

In a valid sense, therefore, it may be said that the formation of the great Loyalist party of the American Revolution

dates from about the time of the Congress of 1774. Moreover, its period of greatest activity in argumentative literature is from that time until the early summer of 1776, when nearly all further use for argumentative literature on that particular subject was brought to an end by the Declaration of Independence. The writings of the Loyalists, from the middle of 1776 down to 1783, form no longer a literature of argumentative discussion, but rather a literature of emotional appeal, exultant, hortatory, derisive, denunciatory, —a literature chiefly lyrical and satirical.

II.

Even yet, in this last decade of the nineteenth century, it is by no means easy for Americans—especially if, as is the case with the present writer, they be descended from men who thought and fought on behalf of the Revolution—to take a disinterested attitude, that is, an historical one, toward those Americans who thought and fought against the Revolution. Both as to the men and as to the questions involved in that controversy, the rehearsal of the claims of the victorious side has been going on among us, now for a hundred years or more, in tradition, in history, in oration, in song, in ceremony. Hardly have we known, seldom have we been reminded, that the side of the Loyalists, as they called themselves, of the Tories, as they were scornfully nicknamed by their opponents, was even in argument not a weak one, and in motive and sentiment not a base one, and in devotion and self-sacrifice not an unheroic one. While the war was going forward, of course the animosities aroused by it were too hot and too fierce, especially between the two opposing groups of Americans, to permit either party in the controversy to do justice to the logical or to the personal merit of the other. When at last the war came to an end, and the champions of the Revolution were in absolute triumph, then the more prominent Tories had to flee for their lives; they had to flee from the wrath that had

come, and to bury themselves, either in other lands or in obscure places of this land. Then, of course, they and all their detested notions and emotions and deeds, whether grand or petty or base, went down out of sight, submerged beneath the abhorrence of the victorious Revolutionists, and doomed, as it appears, to at least one solid century of oratorical and poetical infamy, which has found its natural and organized expression in each recurring Fourth of July, and in each reappearance of the birthday of Washington. May it not, however, at last be assumed that a solid century should be, even under such conditions, a sufficient refrigerator for overheated political emotion? May we not now hope that it will not any longer cost us too great an effort to look calmly, even considerately, at least fairly, upon what, in the words and acts of the Tories, our fathers and grandfathers could hardly endure to look at all? And, surely, our willingness to do all this can hardly be lessened by the consideration that, "in dealing with an enemy, not only dead, but dead in exile and in defeat, candor prescribes the fullest measure of generous treatment."[1] At any rate, the American Revolution affords no exemption from the general law of historic investigation,—that the truth is to be found only by him who searches for it with an unbiased mind. Until we shall be able to take, respecting the problems and the parties of our own Revolution, the same attitude which we freely and easily take respecting the problems and parties of other revolutions—that is, the attitude, not of hereditary partisans, but of scientific investigators—will it be forbidden us to acquire a thoroughly discriminating and just acquaintance with that prodigious epoch in our history.

III.

As preliminary to some examination of the argumentative value of the position taken by the Loyalist party, let us

[1] Winthrop Sargent, Preface to "The Loyalist Poetry," etc., vi.

inquire, for a moment, what recognition may be due to them simply as persons. Who and what were the Tories of the American Revolution? As to their actual number, there is some difficulty in framing even a rough estimate. No attempt at a census of political opinions was ever made during that period; and no popular vote was ever taken of a nature to indicate, even approximately, the numerical strength of the two opposing schools of political thought. Of course, in every community there were Tories who were Tories in secret. These could not be counted, for the good reason that they could not be known. Then, again, the number of openly avowed Tories varied somewhat with variations in the prosperity of the Revolution. Still further, their number varied with variations of locality. Throughout the entire struggle, by far the largest number of Tories was to be found in the colony of New York, particularly in the neighborhood of its chief city. Of the other middle colonies, while there were many Tories in New Jersey, in Delaware, and in Maryland, probably the largest number lived in Pennsylvania,—a number so great that a prominent officer[1] in the Revolutionary army described it as the "enemies' country." Indeed, respecting the actual preponderance of the Tory party in these two central colonies, an eminent champion of the Revolution bore this startling testimony: "New York and Pennsylvania were so nearly divided—if their propensity was not against us—that if New England on one side and Virginia on the other had not kept them in awe, they would have joined the British."[2] Of the New England colonies, Connecticut had the greatest number of Tories; and next, in proportion to population, was the district which was afterwards known as the State of Vermont. Proceeding to the colonies south of the Potomac, we find that in Virginia, especially after hostilities began, the Tories were decidedly less in number than the Whigs. In North Carolina, the two parties were about

[1] Timothy Pickering.

[2] "The Works of John Adams," x. 63.

evenly divided. In South Carolina, the Tories were the more numerous party; while in Georgia their majority was so great that, in 1781, they were preparing to detach that colony from the general movement of the rebellion, and probably would have done so, had it not been for the embarrassing accident which happened to Cornwallis at Yorktown in the latter part of that year.

If we may accept these results as giving us a fair, even though crude, estimate concerning the local distribution of the Tories, we have still to come back to the question which deals with their probable number in the aggregate. Naturally, on such a problem, the conclusions reached by the opposing parties would greatly differ. Thus, the Tories themselves always affirmed that could there have been a true and an unterrified vote, they would have had a great majority; and that the several measures of the Revolution had not only never been submitted to such a test, but had been resolved upon and forced into effect by a few resolute leaders who, under the names of committees of correspondence, committees of observation, committees of safety, conventions, and congresses, had assumed unconstitutional authority, and had pretended, without valid credentials, to speak and to act for the whole population of their towns, or counties, or provinces. To translate the Tory explanation into the language of the present day, it may be said that, in their belief, the several measures of the Revolution were the work of a well-constructed and powerful political machine, set up in each colony, in each county, in each town, and operated with as much skill and will and unscrupulousness as go into the operation of such machines in our time. This opinion, which, in its substance, was most ably presented in those days by the Tory writers, has been adopted by a very candid English historian now living, who says of the American Revolution that, like most other revolutions, it "was the work of an energetic minority, who succeeded in committing an undecided and fluctuating majority to courses for which they had little love, and leading them

step by step to a position from which it was impossible to recede."[1]

Certainly, with such an estimate as to the superior numbers of the Tories, their own opponents did not agree; but they did admit that the Tory party was at any rate a very large one. Perhaps no statesman on the Whig side was better informed on such a subject than John Adams, or was less inclined to make an undue concession to the enemy; and he gave it as his opinion that about one-third of the people of the thirteen States had been opposed to the measures of the Revolution in all its stages.[2] This opinion of John Adams, which he affirmed more than once in the latter part of his life, was on one occasion mentioned by him in a letter to his old compatriot, Thomas McKean, chief-justice of Pennsylvania, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and a member of every American Congress from that of 1765 to the close of the Revolution. "You say," wrote McKean in reply, "that . . . about a third of the people of the colonies were against the Revolution. It required much reflection before I could fix my opinion on this subject; but on mature deliberation I conclude you are right, and that more than a third of influential characters were against it."[3]

Out of three millions of people, then, at least one million did not approve of the policy of carrying their political opposition to the point of rebellion and separation. According to John Adams and Thomas McKean, every third American whom we could have encountered in this part of the world between 1765 and 1783 was a Loyalist. Surely, an idea—a cause—that was cherished and clung to, amid almost every form of obloquy and disaster, by so vast a section of American society, can hardly deserve any longer to be turned out of court in so summary and contemptuous a fashion as that with which it has been commonly disposed of by American writers.

[1] Lecky, "A History of England in the Eighteenth Century," new ed., iv. 224.
[2] "The Works of John Adams," x. 63, 110. [3] Ibid. 87.

IV.

After the question of number, very properly comes that of quality. What kind of people were these Tories, as regards intelligence, character, and standing in their several communities ?

And here, brushing aside, as unworthy of historical investigators, the partisan and vindictive epithets of the controversy,—many of which, however, still survive even in the historical writings of our own time,—we shall find that the Loyalists were, as might be expected, of all grades of personal worth and worthlessness; and that, while there was among them, no doubt, the usual proportion of human selfishness, malice, and rascality, as a class they were not bad people, much less were they execrable people—as their opponents at the time commonly declared them to be.

In the first place, there was, prior to 1776, the official class; that is, the men holding various positions in the civil and military and naval services of the government, their immediate families, and their social connections. All such persons may be described as inclining to the Loyalist view in consequence of official bias.

Next were certain colonial politicians who, it may be admitted, took a rather selfish and an unprincipled view of the whole dispute, and who, counting on the probable, if not inevitable, success of the British arms in such a conflict, adopted the Loyalist side, not for conscience' sake but for profit's sake, and in the expectation of being rewarded for their fidelity by offices and titles, and especially by the confiscated estates of the rebels, after the rebels themselves should have been defeated, and their leaders hanged or sent into exile.

As composing still another class of Tories, may be mentioned probably a vast majority of those who stood for the commercial interests, for the capital and the tangible property of the country, and who, with the instincts natural to persons who have something considerable to lose, disap-

proved of all measures for pushing the dispute to the point of disorder, riot, and civil war.

Still another class of Loyalists was made up of people of professional training and occupation,—clergymen, physicians, lawyers, teachers,—a clear majority of whom seem to have been set against the ultimate measures of the Revolution.

Finally, and in general, it may be said that a majority of those who, of whatever occupation, of whatever grade of culture or of wealth, would now be described as conservative people, were Loyalists during the American Revolution. And by way of concession to the authority and force of truth, what has to be said respecting the personal quality commonly attaching to those who, in any age or country, are liable to be classed as conservative people? Will it be denied that within that order of persons, one may usually find at least a fair portion of the cultivation, of the moral thoughtfulness, of the personal purity and honor, existing in the entire community to which they happen to belong?

Precisely this description, at any rate, applies to the conservative class in the American colonies during that epoch, —a majority of whom dissented from those extreme measures which at last transformed into a revolution a political movement which began with the avowed purpose of confining itself to a struggle for redress of grievances, and within the limits of constitutional opposition. If, for example, we consider the point with reference to cultivation and moral refinement, it may seem to us a significant fact that among the members of the Loyalist party are to be found the names of a great multitude of the graduates of our colonial colleges—especially of Harvard, William and Mary, Yale, Princeton, and Pennsylvania. Thus, in an act of banishment passed by Massachusetts, in September, 1778, against the most prominent of the Tory leaders in that State, one may now read the names of three hundred and ten of her citizens. And who were they? Let us go over their names,

Are these the names of profligates and desperadoes, or even of men of slight and equivocal consideration? To any one at all familiar with the history of colonial New England, that list of men, denounced to exile and loss of property on account of their opinions, will read almost like the beadroll of the oldest and noblest families concerned in the founding and upbuilding of New England civilization. Moreover, of that catalogue of three hundred and ten men of Massachusetts, banished for an offence to which the most of them appear to have been driven by conscientious convictions, more than sixty[1] were graduates of Harvard. This fact is probably a typical one; and of the whole body of the Loyalists throughout the thirteen colonies, it must be said that it contained, as one of its ablest antagonists long after admitted, "more than a third of influential characters,"—that is, a very considerable portion of the customary chiefs and representatives of conservatism in each community.

By any standard of judgment, therefore, according to which we usually determine the personal quality of any party of men and women in this world—whether the standard be intellectual, or moral, or social, or merely conventional—the Tories of the Revolution seem to have been not a profligate party, nor an unprincipled one, nor a reckless or even a light-minded one, but, on the contrary, to have had among them a very considerable portion of the most refined, thoughtful, and conscientious people in the colonies. So true is this, that in 1807 a noble-minded Scottish woman, Mistress Anne Grant of Laggan, who in her early life had been familiar with American colonial society, compared the loss which America suffered in consequence of the expatriation of the Loyalists by the Revolution, to the loss which France suffered in consequence of the expatriation of so many of her Protestants by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.[2]

So much, then, must be said on behalf of the Tories of

[1] George E. Ellis, in "Narr. and Crit. Hist. Am.," vii. 195.

[2] Mrs. Anne Grant, "Memoirs of an American Lady," etc., 353.

the Revolution,—in point of numbers, they were far from inconsiderable, and in point of character, they were far from despicable. On the one hand, they formed no mere rump party. If they were not actually a majority of the American people,—as they themselves always claimed to be, and as some careful scholars now think they were,—they did at least constitute a huge minority of the American people: they formed a section of colonial society too important on the score of mere numbers to be set down as a paltry handful of obstructives; while in any rightful estimate of personal value, quite aside from mere numbers, they seem to deserve the consideration which conscientious and cultivated people of one party never ask in vain of conscientious and cultivated people of the opposite party,—at least after the issues of the controversy are closed.

V.

Pressing forward, then, with our investigation, we proceed to apply to the American Loyalists that test by which we must judge any party of men who have taken one side, and have borne an important share in any great historical controversy. This is the test of argumentative value. It asks whether the logical position of the party was or was not a strong one.

Even yet it is not quite needless to remind ourselves that the American Revolution was a war of argument long before it became a war of physical force; and that, in this war of argument, were involved a multitude of difficult questions, —constitutional, legal, political, ethical,—with respect to which honest and thoughtful people were compelled to differ. All these questions, however, may, for our purposes, be reduced to just two: first, the question of what was lawful under the existing constitution of the British empire; and secondly, the question of what was expedient under the existing circumstances of the colonies. Now, paradoxical as it may seem to many of the American de-

scendants of the victorious party, each of those questions had two very real and quite opposite sides; much was to be said for each side; and for the Tory side so much was to be said in the way of solid fact and of valid reasoning, that an intelligent and a noble-minded American might have taken that side, and might have stuck to it, and might have gone into battle for it, and might have imperiled all the interests of his life in defense of it, without any just impeachment of his reason or of his integrity—without deserving to be called, then or since then, either a weak man or a bad one.

That we may develop before our eyes something of the argumentative strength of the Loyalist position, in the appeal which it actually made to honest men at that time, let us take up for a moment the first of the two questions to which, as has just been said, the whole dispute may be reduced,—the question of what was lawful under the existing constitution of the British empire. Let us strike into the very heart of that question. It was the contention of the American Whigs that the British parliament could not lawfully tax us, because by so doing it would be violating an ancient maxim of the British constitution: "No taxation without representation." Have we not all been taught from our childhood that the citation of that old maxim simply settled the constitutional merits of the whole controversy, and settled it absolutely in favor of the Whigs? But did it so settle it? Have we not been accustomed to think that the refusal of the American Tories to give way before the citation of that maxim was merely a case of criminal stupidity or of criminal perversity on their part? But was it so?

On the contrary, many of the profoundest constitutional lawyers in America, as well as in England, both rejected the foregoing Whig contention, and at the same time admitted the soundness and the force of the venerable maxim upon which that contention was alleged to rest. Thus the leading English jurists, who supported the parliamentary taxation of the colonies, did not dispute that

maxim. Even George Grenville, the author and champion of the Stamp Act, did not dispute it. "The colonies claim, it is true," said he, "the privilege which is common to all British subjects, of being taxed only with their own consent, given by their representatives. And may they ever enjoy the privilege in all its extent; may this sacred pledge of liberty be preserved inviolate to the utmost verge of our dominions, and to the latest pages of our history! I would never lend my hand toward forging chains for America, lest, in so doing, I should forge them for myself. But the remonstrances of the Americans fail in the great point of the colonies not being represented in parliament, which is the common council of the whole empire, and as such is as capable of imposing internal taxes as impost duties, or taxes on intercolonial trade, or laws of navigation." [1]

These words of Grenville may help us to understand the position of the American Loyalists. They frankly admitted the maxim of "No taxation without representation"; but the most of them denied that the maxim was violated by the acts of parliament laying taxation upon the colonies. Here everything depends, they argued, on the meaning to be attached to the word representation; and that meaning is to be ascertained by ascertaining what was understood by the word in England at the time when this old maxim originated, and in the subsequent ages during which it had been quoted and applied. Now, the meaning then attached to the word in actual constitutional experience in England is one which shows that the commons of America, like the commons of England, are alike represented in that great branch of the British parliament which proclaims its representative character in its very name,—the house of commons. During the whole period in which the maxim under

[1] Given in George Bancroft, "History of the United States," last revision, iii. 98. These sentences of Grenville, which are not to be found in Hansard, seem to have been compiled by Bancroft from several contemporary reports to be met with in private letters from persons who heard Grenville. Compare 18th ed. of Bancroft, v. 237 n.

consideration had been acquiring authority, the idea was that representation in parliament was constituted, not through any uniform distribution, among individual persons, of the privilege of voting for members, but rather through a distribution of such privilege among certain organized communities, as counties, cities, boroughs, and universities, to which at an early day this function had been assigned according to a method then deemed equable and just. Furthermore, as it has been from the beginning, so is it still a principle of parliamentary representation, that from the moment a member is thus chosen to sit in parliament, he is the representative of the whole empire and not of his particular constituency. He "is under no obligation, therefore, to follow instructions from the voters or the inhabitants of the district from which he is chosen. They have no legal means of enforcing any instructions. They cannot demand his resignation. In fact, a member cannot resign." Moreover, the members of the house of lords "represent, in principle, the interests of the whole empire, and of all classes, as truly as the commons."[1] Therefore, the historic meaning of the word representation, as the word has always been used in English constitutional experience, seemed fairly to justify the Loyalist contention, that the several organized British communities in America, as an integral part of the British empire, were to all intents and purposes represented in the British parliament, which sat at the capital as the supreme council of the whole empire, and exercised legislative authority coextensive with the boundaries of that empire.

It was no sufficient reply to this statement to say, as some did say, that such representation as has just been described was a very imperfect kind of representation. Of course it was an imperfect kind of representation; but, what-

[1] John W. Burgess, "Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law," ii. 67, 68. The reader should examine the whole of Professor Burgess's section on "The Principle of Representation in the Parliament," 65–69.

ever it was, it was exactly the kind of representation that was meant by the old constitutional maxim thus cited; for it was the only kind of representation practised, or known, or perhaps even conceived of in England during all those ages which had witnessed the birth and the growth of this old formula. The truth is that representation, as a political fact in this world, has thus far been a thing of degrees—a thing of less and of more; that perfect representation has even yet not been anywhere attained in this world; that in the last century representation in England was very much less perfect than it has since become; and, finally, that, in the period now dealt with, what had always been meant by the word representation in the British empire was satisfied by such a composition of the house of commons as that, while its members were voted for by very few even of the common people in England, yet, the moment that its members were elected, they became, in the eye of the constitution and in the spirit of this old formula, the actual representatives of all the commoners of the whole empire, in all its extent, in all its dominions and dependencies.

Accordingly, when certain English commoners in America at last rose up and put forward the claim that, merely because they had no votes for members of the house of commons, therefore that house did not represent them, and therefore they could not lawfully be taxed by parliament, it was very naturally said, in reply, that these English commoners in America were demanding for themselves a new and a peculiar definition of the word representation; a definition never up to that time given to it in England, and never of course up to that time claimed or enjoyed by English commoners in England. For, how was it at that time in England with respect to the electoral privilege? Indeed, very few people in England then had votes for members of the house of commons,—only one-tenth of the entire population of the realm. How about the other nine-tenths of the population of the realm? Had not those British sub-

jects in England as good a right as these British subjects in America to deny that they were represented in parliament, and that they could be lawfully taxed by parliament? Nay, such was the state of the electoral system that entire communities of British subjects in England, composing such cities as Leeds, Halifax, Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool,—communities as populous and as rich as entire provinces in America,—had no votes whatever for members of parliament. Yet, did the people of these several communities in England refuse to pay taxes levied by act of parliament—that is, did they, for that reason, proclaim the nullification of a law of the general government? "We admit," continued the American Loyalists, "that for all these communities of British subjects—for those in England, as well as for these in America—the existing representation is very imperfect; that it should be reformed and made larger and more uniform than it now is; and we are ready and anxious to join in all forms of constitutional agitation, under the leadership of such men as Chatham, and Camden, and Burke, and Barré, and Fox, and Pownall, to secure such reform; and yet it remains true that the present state of representation throughout the British empire, imperfect as it is, is representation in the very sense understood and practised by the English race whenever hitherto they have alleged the maxim,—'No taxation without representation.' That old maxim, therefore, can hardly be said to be violated by the present imperfect state of our representative system. The true remedy for the defects of which we complain is reform—reform of the entire representative system both in England and in America—reform by means of vigorous political agitation—reform, then, and not a rejection of the authority of the general government; reform, and not nullification; reform, and not a disruption of the empire."

Such is a rough statement, and, as I think, a fair one, of the leading argument of the American Loyalists with respect to the first of the two great questions then dividing the American people, namely, the question of what was lawful

under the existing constitution of the British empire. Certainly, the position thus taken by the Loyalists was a very strong one,—so strong, in fact, that honest and reasonable Americans could take it, and stand upon it, and even offer up their lives in defense of it, without being justly liable to the charge that they were either peculiarly base, or peculiarly stupid.

Indeed, under this aspect of legality, the concession just made by us does scant justice to the Tories—or to the truth. The dispute, it must be remembered, had arisen among a people who were then subjects of the British empire, and were proud of the fact; who exulted in the blessings of the British constitution; and who, upon the matter at issue, began by confidently appealing to that constitution for support. The contention of the Tories was that, under the constitution, the authority of the imperial parliament was, even for purposes of revenue legislation, binding in America, as in all other parts of the empire, and even though America should have no members in the house of commons. This the Whigs denied. It was, then, a question of British constitutional law. Upon that question, which of the two parties was in the right? Is it now possible to doubt that it was the Tories? A learned American writer upon the law, now one of the justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, in referring to the decision of Mr. Chief-Justice Hutchinson sustaining the legality of writs of assistance, has given this opinion: "A careful examination of the question compels the conclusion . . . that there was at least reasonable ground for holding, as a matter of mere law, that the British parliament had power to bind the colonies."[1] This view, of course, has been sustained by the highest English authorities upon British constitutional law, from the time of Lord Mansfield to the present. "As a matter of abstract right," says Sir Vernon Harcourt,[2] "the

[1] Horace Gray, "Quincy's Mass. Reports, 1761–1762," Appendix I., page 540.

[2] Writing as "Historicus," in "The Times," for June 1, 1876, and cited in A. Todd, "Parliamentary Gov. in the Brit. Col.," 27.

mother country has never parted with the claim of ultimate supreme authority for the imperial legislature. If it did so, it would dissolve the imperial tie, and convert the colonies into foreign and independent states." "The constitutional supremacy of the imperial parliament over all the colonial possessions of the crown," says another eminent English writer, "was formally reasserted in 1865, by an act passed to remove certain doubts respecting the powers of colonial legislatures. . . . It is clear that imperial acts are binding upon the colonial subjects of the crown, as much as upon all other British subjects, whenever, by express provision or by necessary intendment, they relate to or concern the colonies." [1]

But after the question as to what was lawful under the existing constitution of the British empire, came the question as to what was expedient under the existing circumstances of the American colonies. Now, as it happened, this latter question had two aspects, one of which pointed toward the expediency of rejecting the taxing power of parliament, even though such power did exist under the constitution; the other pointed toward the expediency of separation from the empire.

Having in view, at present, the former aspect of this question, the American Whigs went forward and took the ground that, if the claim of parliament to tax them was indeed justified by the constitution, then so much the worse for the constitution,—since it was a claim too full of political danger to be any longer submitted to: "If parliament, to which we send no members, may tax us three pence on a pound of tea, it may, if it pleases, tax us a shilling, or a guinea. Once concede to it this right to tax us at all, and what security have we against its taxing us excessively?—what security have we for our freedom or our property against any enormity of oppression?" And what was the answer of the American Tories to this argument? "Yes,"

[1] A. Todd, "Parl. Gov.," etc., 189. The act of parliament above referred to, is 28 & 29 Vict. (1865), cap. lxiii. secs. 1, 2.

said the Tories, "you allege a grave political danger. But does it really exist? Is it likely ever to exist? Are you not guilty of the fallacy of arguing against the use of a power, simply from the possibility of its abuse? In this world every alleged danger must be estimated in the light of common sense and of reasonable probability. In that light, what ground have we for alarm? The line drawn by the supreme legislature itself for the exercise of its own power, is a perfectly distinct one,—that it should tax no part of the empire to a greater amount than its just and equitable proportion. As respects America, the supreme legislature has not yet overstepped that line; it has shown no disposition to overstep that line; we have not the slightest reason to suppose that it ever will overstep that line. Moreover, all the instincts of the English race are for fair play, and would be overwhelmingly against such an injustice, were parliament to attempt it. It is thought in England that as we, British subjects in America, receive our share of the benefits of membership of the empire, so we ought to pay our share toward the cost of those benefits. In apportioning our share of the cost, they have not fixed upon an amount which anybody, even here, calls excessive; indeed, it is rather below than above the amount that might justly be named. Now, in this world, affairs cannot be conducted—civilization cannot go on—without confidence in somebody. And in this matter, we deem it reasonable and prudent to have confidence in the good sense and in the justice of the English race, and especially of the house of commons, which is the great council of the commoners of the English race. True, we do not at present send members to that great council, any more than do certain great tax-paying communities in England; but, then, no community even in England has, in reality, so many representatives in parliament—so many powerful friends and champions in both houses of parliament—as we American communities have: not only a great minority of silent voters, but many of the ablest debaters and party leaders there,—Barré, and

Pownall, and Conway, and Fox, and Edmund Burke in the lower house, and in the upper house Lord Camden, and, above all, the great Earl of Chatham himself. Surely, with such men as these to speak for us, and to represent our interests in parliament and before the English people, no ministry could long stand, which should propose any measure liable to be condemned as grossly beyond the line of equity and fair play."

The Americans who took this line of reasoning in those days were called Tories. And what is to be thought of this line of reasoning to-day? Is it not at least rational and fair? Even though not irresistible, has it not a great deal of strength in it? Even though we, perhaps, should have declined to adopt it, are we not obliged to say that it might have been adopted by Americans who were both clear-headed and honest-minded?

VI.

And thus we are brought to the second aspect of the question of expediency,—the great and ultimate issue of the whole controversy,—that of Independence, which, however, need not be dealt with by us till, in the course of this history, we reach the year wherein that doctrine suddenly leaped into the arena and demanded recognition. In the meantime, for a clearer understanding of the Loyalist attitude toward all matters in dispute prior to that of Independence, it will be profitable for us here to note three grave errors closely connected with the whole subject, and still prevalent in popular American expositions of it.

First, it is an error to represent the Tories of the American Revolution as a party of mere negation and obstruction. They did deny, they did attempt to obstruct; but they also had positive political ideas, as well as precise measures in creative statesmanship to offer in the place of those ideas and measures to which they made objection, and which they would have kept from prevailing if they could.

Secondly, it is an error to represent the Tories of the American Revolution as a party opposed either to any reform in the relations of the colonists with the mother country, or to the extension of human rights and liberties here or elsewhere. From the beginning of the agitation, they clearly saw, they strongly felt, they frankly declared, that the constitutional relations of the colonies with the mother country were in a crude state, were unsatisfactory, were in need of being carefully revised and reconstructed. This admission of theirs, they never recalled. Quite aside from the question of its legality, they doubted the expediency, under modern conditions, of such an exertion of parliamentary authority as the ministry had forced into life. Upon these points, there was substantial agreement between all Americans; namely, that there was a wrong, that there was a danger, that there should be a reform. It was chiefly as to the method and the process and the scope of this needed reform, that Americans broke asunder into two great opposing parties. The exact line of cleavage between these two parties, together with the tone and the spirit characteristic of each party, may now be traced with precision in the history of the Congress of 1774. Within that body, the Tory party, both as regards its political ideas and its conscientiousness, was represented by Joseph Galloway, who then and there tried, but tried in vain, to induce the Congress to adopt such measures as would commit the American people to reform through reconciliation, rather than to reform through separation.

Thirdly, it is an error to represent the Tories of our Revolution as composed of Americans lacking in love for their native country, or in zeal for its liberty, or in willingness to labor, or fight, or even to die, for what they conceived to be its interests. As was most natural, the party which succeeded in carrying through the Congress of 1774 such measures and methods of political reform as, in fact, led to civil war, and, finally, to American Independence, took for itself the name of the patriotic party, its members being com-

monly called patriots. Beyond question, the Whig party was a patriotic party; but it is not now apparent that those Americans who failed in their honest and sacrificial championship of measures which would have given us political reform and political safety, but without civil war and without an angry disruption of the English-speaking race, can justly be regarded as having been, either in doctrine, or in purpose, or in act, an unpatriotic party.

CHAPTER XIV.

LOYALIST SERMON WRITERS: JONATHAN BOUCHER.

I.—Restraints upon the freedom of the Loyalist clergy—The career of Jonathan Boucher—His frankness and courage in controversy—His physical resistance to all attempts to silence him.

II.—Publishes in London thirteen discourses preached in America on political affairs between 1763 and 1775—A Loyalist "View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution"—Notes of his intellectual sincerity, love of truth, and courage—His fearless antagonism of evil things then popular, the spirit of war, disregard of the rights of the Indians, and negro-slavery.

III.—His fearless antagonism of the several stages of the Revolutionary movement—His ideas those of an old-fashioned believer in church and king—Civil government of divine origin and authority—The degradation of government and of governors through the opposite theory—The leadership of those who "prevail with their tongues"—The untruth of the doctrine of the natural equality of all men.

IV.—His consistency in opposing the Revolution—Depicts the decay of old-time loyalty in Virginia—Defines an American Whig, and a low churchman—His attitude toward the controversy over the American episcopate—He laments the taxing policy of the British ministry as a blunder, but demands that it be resisted by lawful means only—The irresistible power of submission—Boucher's violent ejection from his pulpit and from the country.

I.

WHILE almost every aspect of the Revolutionary movement may be illustrated from the published sermons of the preachers who supported that movement, the opposite is the case respecting the preachers who were in antagonism to it: their sermons having seldom found their way into print,—nay, the privilege of preaching them having been early taken away.

One of the most impressive examples of high principle and

of courageous conduct on the part of these Loyalist clergymen, is furnished by the career of Jonathan Boucher, who was born in England in 1738; removed to America in 1759; was ordained priest by the Bishop of London in 1762; served as rector in Virginia and Maryland until September, 1775; and being then "outlawed and driven away"[1] on account of his opposition to the Revolution, went back to England and was made vicar of Epsom, where he died in 1804.

He had come to America, in the first instance, as a tutor to the sons of a Virginia planter; and his taking holy orders was the result of an appeal made to him by a neighboring parish that had lost its minister. Although he performed the duties of his sacred office with great sincerity, devotion, and dignity, he never ceased to be a man of affairs, even a man of the world. He owned a large plantation, with many slaves; he conducted a boarding school for thirty or forty boys; he was active and influential in colonial politics. While in charge of the parish at Annapolis, he managed the assembly on behalf of the government, he drew up or revised nearly all the bills that passed, he wrote the speeches and messages of the governor and the most important papers of the council. He had, moreover, many a revel in newspaper controversy over affairs of church and state; he published political essays, songs, and epigrams; being a patron of the theatre, he promoted its interests by a prologue or two, and even by some lines addressed to one of the actresses.[2]

His great frankness, both in the pulpit and out of it, in opposition to the measures of the Revolutionist party, drew upon him, as was to be expected, the fiercest enmity; and in dealing with the personal attacks which, at such a time, such a man was sure to incur, he deliberately acted upon the theory, "that the true way to escape a danger is fairly

[1] Boucher, "A View of the Revolution," etc., 594.

[2] Passages from Boucher's "Autobiography" as contributed by his grandson, Jonathan Bouchier, to "Notes and Queries," 5th Ser. vi. 21–22.

to meet it. I have, I believe, a tolerably vigorous and resolute mind; but as to fighting, in every mode of it, there is nothing I so much dread and detest. Everything, therefore, that I did in that way was really and truly to preserve me from fighting. And it appears that I succeeded."[1] Thus, having knocked down a burly blacksmith who had been set upon him, he acquired in all that region by that act of prowess greater honor, as he says, than would have been accorded to him there for the brains of Newton, if he had possessed them;[2] and thenceforward no man thought it prudent to provoke a personal issue with him on the supposition that he would not meet it like a gentleman.

It was, therefore, chiefly in his public capacity as a preacher that his courage was most commonly put to the test. "I endeavored in my sermons, and in various pieces published in the gazettes of the country, to check the immense mischief that was impending, but I endeavored in vain. I was soon restrained from preaching, and the press was no longer open to me. The first open and avowed violence I met with was on account of my expressly declining, when applied to by some noisy patriots heretofore of no great note, to preach a sermon to recommend the suffering people of Boston to the charity of my parish. Their port was shut up by act of parliament; and as it was alleged that they suffered thus in the common cause, contributions were collected for them all over the continent: the true motive was by these means to raise a sum sufficient to purchase arms and ammunition. I also refused to set my hand to various associations and resolves, all, in my estimation, very unnecessary and unjust; in consequence of which I soon became a marked man, and, though I endeavored to conduct myself with all possible temper and even caution, I daily met with insults, indignities, and injuries."[3] "I

[1] Passages from Boucher's "Autobiography" as contributed by his grandson, Jonathan Bouchier, to "Notes and Queries," 5th Ser. vi. 142.

[2] Ibid. 141.

[3] Ibid. 82.

received letters threatening me with the most dreadful consequences if I did not desist from preaching at all. All the answers I gave to these threats were in my sermons, in which I declared I could never suffer any human authority to intimidate me from doing what I believed to be my duty to God and his church; and for more than six months I preached, when I did preach, with a pair of loaded pistols lying on the cushion; having given notice that if any one attempted, what had long been threatened, to drag me out of the pulpit, I should think myself justified in repelling violence by violence. Some time after, a public fast was ordained; and on this occasion my curate, who was a strong republican, had prepared a sermon for the occasion, and supported by a set of factious men, was determined to oppose my entering my own pulpit. When the day came, I was at my church at least a quarter of an hour before the time of beginning; but, behold, Mr. Harrison was in the desk, and was expected, I was soon told, to preach. In addition to this, I saw my church filled with not less than two hundred armed men under the command of Mr. Osborne Sprigg, who soon told me I was not to preach. I returned for answer that there was but one way by which they could keep me out of it, and that was by taking away my life. At the proper time, with my sermon in one hand and a loaded pistol in the other, like Nehemiah I prepared to ascend my pulpit, when one of my friends, Mr. David Cranford, having got behind me, threw his arms round me and held me fast. He assured me that he had heard the most positive orders given to twenty men picked out for the purpose, to fire on me the moment I got into the pulpit, which therefore he never would permit me to do, unless I was stronger than himself and some others who stood close to him. I maintained that, once to flinch was forever to invite danger; but my well-wishers prevailed, and, when I was down, it is horrid to recollect what a scene of confusion ensued. Sprigg and his company contrived to surround me and to exclude every moderate man. Seeing myself thus

circumstanced, it occurred to me that there was but one way to save my life,—this was by seizing Sprigg, as I immediately did, by the collar, and with my cocked pistol in the other hand, assuring him that if any violence were offered to me, I would instantly blow his brains out. I then told him he might conduct me to my house, and I would leave them. This he did, and we marched together upwards of a hundred yards, guarded by his whole company—whom he had the meanness to order to play the rogues' march all the way we went. Thus ended this dreadful day, which was a Thursday. On the following Sunday, I again went to the same church, and was again opposed, but more feebly than before. I preached the sermon I should have preached on the Thursday, with some comments on the transactions of the day."[1]

II.

Though none of Boucher's sermons were printed during the Revolution, long afterward, in 1797, he published in London a series of thirteen discourses having reference to public events in America between 1763 and 1775, and actually preached by him to various congregations in the two colonies with which he had been connected. Dealing, thus, with the chief topics that employed and agitated the minds of the American people, from the time of the English acquisition of Canada to that of the battle of Bunker Hill and the assumption by Washington of the command of the American forces, it was not unsuitable that the volume containing these remarkable sermons should be entitled "A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution." Nowhere else, probably, can be found so comprehensive, so able, and so authentic a presentation of the deeper principles and motives of the American Loyalists, particularly from the standpoint of a high-church clergyman of great purity and steadiness of character, of great moral courage,

[1] "Notes and Queries," 5th Ser. i. 103–104.

of great learning, finally, of great love for the country thus torn and distracted by fratricidal disagreements. "The unpopularity of my principles," said he more than thirty years after these discourses were written, "cannot, I should hope, be fairly objected to by any man who really loves truth; because it is at least some proof that my intentions are sincere, and that I am in earnest. And though it be true that there is nothing particularly attractive or alluring in the composition of these discourses, yet, as that may in some degree, perhaps, arise from their so often adverting to minute and ordinary facts and circumstances not likely to be noticed by other writers, even this defect may be pardoned by those who are less solicitous to be amused than edified, and are desirous thoroughly to understand the subject."[1]

Perhaps the deepest impression now to be made by these writings, is that of the intellectual sincerity of their author; the independence and purity of his quest for the truth; the thoroughness, refinement, and nobility of his usual method in dealing with the perplexing subjects discussed by him; his absolute fidelity to his own opinions in total disregard of their opposition to those then stormily in vogue about him.

Thus, in 1763, at a time of passionate and clamorous enthusiasm over military success and military glory, he calmly deprecates both, as products of "a perversion and misapplication of fine talents"; he contrasts the great generals of history—"the butchers and destroyers of their kind"—with men like Socrates, Fénelon, and William Penn, the true guardians and benefactors of the human family. "True greatness," he tells a people then electrified by a splendid embodiment of military genius last seen on the heights of Quebec, "deserves all the honor that the world can pay it; but fields dyed with blood are not the scenes in which true greatness is most likely to be found. He who simplifies a mechanical process, who supplies us with a new convenience or comfort, or even he who con-

[1] "A View," etc., Pref. xxiii.–xxiv.

trives an elegant superfluity, is, in every proper sense of the phrase, a more useful man than any of those masters in the art of destruction, who, to the shame of the world, have hitherto monopolized almost all its honors." [1] Among a people accustomed to regard the American Indians as noxious vermin to be exterminated as fast as possible, he declares that the habitual treatment of these people by English Christians from the beginning, had been "equally unsuitable to the genius of our government and the mild spirit of our religion." [2] Among a people accustomed for more than a hundred years to be supported by the labor of slaves, he asserts that if ever the American colonies are to "be improved to their utmost capacity, an essential part of the improvement must be the abolition of slavery." [3] "I believe it is capable of demonstration that, except the immediate interest which every man has in the property of his slaves, it would be for every man's interest that there were no slaves; and for this plain reason, because the free labor of a free man, who is regularly hired and paid for the work which he does, and only for what he does, is, in the end, cheaper than the extorted eye-service of a slave." [4]

III.

With the same independence of mind, with the same indisposition to purchase popularity by adapting his doctrines to its demands, he dealt from the pulpit with the several topics which, during the subsequent twelve years, came into the dispute between the colonies and the English ministry. The spirit in which he approached all these

[1] "A View," etc., 10–11. [2] Ibid. 29. [3] Ibid. 40.

[4] Ibid. 39. Like many other Americans at that time who disapproved of slavery, Boucher himself kept slaves; but he was noted for the enlightenment and humanity of his treatment of them. Long afterward, he wrote in his "Autobiography" that no compliment was ever paid him which went so near his heart as that which was bestowed by a negro, who, when asked to whom he belonged, replied, "To Parson Boucher, thank God!" "Notes and Queries,' 5th Ser. vi. 23. When, in 1775, he and his family were compelled to flee from the country, they left their house amidst the tears and cries of their slaves. Ibid. 5th Ser. i. 104.

troublesome matters was, without variation, that of an old-fashioned believer in church and king,—in the divine origin and the divine authority of government, consequently, in obedience to government as a religious as well as a civil duty: "Of all the theories respecting the origin of government, with which the world has been either puzzled, amused, or instructed, that of the Scriptures alone is accompanied by no insuperable difficulties. It was not to be expected from an all-wise and all-merciful Creator, that, having formed creatures capable of order and rule, he should turn them loose into the world under the guidance only of their own unruly wills,—that, like so many wild beasts, they might tear and worry one another in their mad contests for preëminence. . . . We are, indeed, so disorderly and unmanageable, that were it not for the restraints and the terrors of human laws, it would not be possible for us to dwell together. But as men were clearly formed for society and to dwell together, which yet they cannot do without the restraints of law, or, in other words, without government, it is fair to infer that government was also the original intention of God, who never decrees the end, without also decreeing the means. Accordingly, when man was made . . . as soon as there were some to be governed, there were also some to govern. . . . Copying after the fair model of heaven itself, wherein there was government even among the angels, the families of the earth were subjected to rulers, at first set over them by God. 'For there is no power, but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.' The first father, was the first king. . . . Hence it is, that our church, in perfect conformity with the doctrine here inculcated, in her explication of the fifth commandment, from the obedience due to parents, wisely derives the congenial duty of 'honoring the king, and all that are put in authority under him.'"[1]

Nor was he content with merely putting forward his own doctrine of the divine origin and authority of government:

[1] "A View," etc., 523–530.

he boldly denounced as false and disastrous the opposite doctrine then commonly held and loudly advocated by most people about him. "Government being assumed to be a mere human ordinance, it is thence inferred that 'rulers are the servants of the public'; and, if they be, no doubt it necessarily follows, that they may—in the coarse phrase of the times—be 'cashiered' or continued in pay, be reverenced or resisted, according to the mere whim or caprice of those over whom they are appointed to rule."[1] "This low opinion of government naturally produces another false and dangerous estimate of things: in proportion as government is degraded, those who depress it exalt themselves. Hence, to be a friend of government, subjects a man to the mortifying suspicion of being of an abject and servile mind; whilst popularity is sure to attach to those who oppose government, or rather perhaps the ministers of government. And hence, too, as flimsy oratory is always most in vogue when sound principles and sound learning are least so, our forest committees, aping the members of our conventions and congresses in their volubility of speech, as well as in their patriotism, harangue not less vehemently on those unvarying topics—the abuses of government, the vileness of those whom they call the tools of government, the disinterestedness of opposition, and the genuine love of liberty which actuates those who conduct opposition. . . . This is not all. As though there were some irresistible charm in extemporaneous speaking, however rude, the orators of our committees and sub-committees, like those in higher spheres, 'prevail with their tongues.' To public speakers alone is the government of our country now completely committed. It is cantoned out into new districts, and subjected to the jurisdiction of these committees, who, not only without any known law, but directly in the teeth of all law whatever, issue citations, sit in judgment, and inflict pains and penalties on all whom they are pleased to consider as delinquents. Not only new crimes have been

[1] "A View," etc., 544.

thus created, but also new punishments, in comparison with which even the interdiction from fire and water among the Romans was mild and merciful." [1]

Of course, to this writer there could have been nothing but pestilent folly in the notion, then becoming popular, "that the whole human race is born equal; and that no man is naturally inferior or in any respect subjected to another; and that he can be made subject to another only by his own consent. The position is equally ill-founded and false, both in its premises and conclusions. In hardly any sense that can be imagined, is the position strictly true; but, as applied to the case under consideration, it is demonstrably not true. Man differs from man in everything that can be supposed to lead to supremacy and subjection. . . . Without government, there can be no society; nor, without some relative inferiority and superiority, can there be any government." [2]

IV.

With these as his fundamental principles concerning man and society, it is easy to infer what must have been his attitude toward the entire movement of thought and sentiment which constituted the American Revolution: he deplored and opposed it, but always like a gentleman, a scholar, and a Christian. "Many old men among us," said he, in 1771, in a sermon at St. Mary's Church, Caroline County, Virginia, "who had the happiness to be established in their principles in other times than these, see and lament that a great change has taken place . . . in Virginia. . . . Loyalty, in its excesses, may have been absurd, but it never was servile. Even in those days of exuberant loyalty, our people were capable of thinking for themselves, and what they thought, they were not afraid to assert. Virginia was the last of the British dominions that submitted to Cromwell's usurpation, and the first that proclaimed Charles the Second king. But now, taking our cue from popular

[1] "A View," etc., 319-321.

[2] Ibid. 514-515.

declaimers and popular writers in the parent state, we are as forward as the boldest to reprobate all those high notions of loyalty which so honorably distinguished us in the best periods of our history. On the principles of an equal zeal for the prerogatives of the crown, and for the just liberties of the people, our constitution was founded; and on these alone it can now be maintained,—though every pert smatterer in politics has the hardiness and irreverence to attack all those its strong points, which our ancestors reverenced as its chief excellence and support. It surely was something more than ridiculous, when, not long since, a popular candidate at one of our elections solicited your suffrages in his favor, on the plea of his being as to his political tenets a Whig and the advocate of Revolution principles, and in religion a low churchman. If folly can ever excuse audacity, this man's utter ignorance of the terms he used, may be admitted as some apology for his presumption. There is, no doubt, a sober sense to which these now fashionable terms may be restricted, so as not to be inconsistent with the duties which every wise and good man owes to his country; but, it is with sorrow I declare, this is not the sense in which I have of late generally heard them used, or in which they were used by the popular candidate in question. The conduct of those among us who are most forward to assume these titles, affords but too frequent proofs that to be a Whig, consists in being haughty and overbearing in domestic life, in being insolent to inferiors and tyrannical to slaves; that to support Revolution principles, is in everything to oppose and thwart the executive power; and that to be a low churchman, is to entertain and avow a low opinion of religion in general, and especially of established religion,—manifested by never going to church. That so total and important a change in the public mind cannot fail to have a mighty influence on the whole of our colonial system, is evident." [1]

Perhaps on no other portion of the field of Revolutionary thought is the light thrown by this writer more powerful

[1] "A View," etc., 97–99.

than on that relating to the stormy controversy concerning the American episcopate,—a controversy not less vital in the development of the Revolution, than that earlier one over the Stamp Act, or than that later one over the tea tax. The ability and the vigor with which Boucher maintained the proposition that the Anglican Church in America had the right, by the introduction of bishops, to complete its own necessary organization there, and that this involved no menace to the religious or the civil liberties of the American people, may be seen in his discourses "On Schisms and Sects,"[1] and "On the American Episcopate."[2]

Finally, concerning the secular dispute between the colonies and the British ministry from 1767 to 1774, Boucher, like nearly all other American Loyalists, evidently thought that the course of the ministry was a blunder; that the colonies had serious grievances to be redressed; and that these grievances would be fairly redressed, if the colonies, trusting to the resistless though slow operation of moral forces, should make their petitions and remonstrances in the right way. And what was the right way? It was that of colonial action through their regular legislatures, and not through irregular and lawless committees, conventions, and congresses. "It is your duty," said he, "to instruct your members to take all the constitutional means in their power to obtain redress. If those means fail of success, you cannot but be sorry and grieved; but you will better bear your disappointment, by being able to reflect that it was not owing to any misconduct of your own. . . . Those persons are as little acquainted with general history, as they are with the particular doctrines of Christianity, who represent such submission as abject and servile. I affirm, with great authority, that there can be no better way of asserting the people's lawful rights, than the disowning unlawful commands, by thus patiently suffering. When this doctrine was more generally embraced, our holy religion gained as much by submission, as it is now in a fair way of losing for want of it. Having, then, my brethren, thus long been

[1] "A View," etc., 46–88.

[2] Ibid. 89–151.

tossed to and fro in a wearisome circle of uncertain traditions, or in speculations and projects still more uncertain, concerning government, what better can you do than, following the apostle's advice, 'to submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well? For, so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honor all men: love the brotherhood: fear God: honor the king.'"[1]

It was for the crime of giving such instruction as this to his congregation, in the parish of Queen Anne in Prince George's County, Maryland, that he was at last forcibly prevented from entering his own pulpit, and was treated, as he himself declared, "with such unmerited insult and indignity as, I believe, has seldom been experienced by persons of my calling in any civilized and Christian country."[2]

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[1] "A View," etc., 559–560.

[2] Ibid. 562. These words are from his "Farewell Sermon," preached in 1775. Of this noble-minded and very able man, there are two sketches by Francis L. Hawks, one being in his "Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of the United States," ii. 269–278, the other in Sprague, "Annals," etc., v. 211–214. A good short account of Boucher by W. P. Courtney is to be found in the "Dictionary of National Biography," sub. nom. Much valuable material relating to Boucher has been published in "Notes and Queries," contributed by Walter Thornbury, by a writer under the signature of "Thrax," by Joseph Lemuel Chester, and by Jonathan Bouchier, a grandson of the old Loyalist: 3d Ser. ix. 75–76, 282–284; 5th Ser. i. 102–104; v. 501–503; vi. 21–23, 81–83, 141–143, 161–162; ix. 50, 68, 89, 311, 371. A very important topic connected with Boucher, is that of his relations with Washington, which were for many years very intimate and cordial, though roughly disturbed by the Revolution; and besides the material in "Notes and Queries," the subject is illustrated by a paper from Moncure Daniel Conway, in "Lippincott's Magazine," for May, 1889, containing many letters which had passed between Boucher and Washington. These letters were placed in Mr. Conway's hands by a grandson of Boucher, Mr. Lampson-Locker of London, known in literature as Frederick Locker, who mentions that Thackeray had had the reading of them when he was writing "The Virginians." Among the studies which occupied Boucher after his return to England was one which led him to compile a "Glossary of Archaic and Provincial Words," published in London in 1832–1833.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LOYALISTS IN ARGUMENT AGAINST THE MEASURES OF THE FIRST CONGRESS—THE "WESTCHESTER FARMER": NOVEMBER, 1774–APRIL, 1775.

I.—The papers of the first Continental Congress—The great impression made by them in Great Britain—Lord Chatham's tribute—Testimony of British newspapers.

II.—The two rival methods for American opposition—The bolder method decided on by the Congress—A commercial war against England—"The Association."

III.—Attack on the measures of the Congress by a "Westchester Farmer"—His "Free Thoughts"—Tone and style of this powerful writer—Sounds an alarm to the agricultural class as to the odious and dangerous features of "The Association"—Great excitement caused by this pamphlet.

IV.—The "Westchester Farmer's" second pamphlet, "The Congress Canvassed"—An alarmist appeal to the merchants of New York—The wider range and more elaborate character of this discussion—Constitutional and economic aspects of the question.

V.—The "Westchester Farmer's" third pamphlet, "A View of the Controversy," in reply to Alexander Hamilton's "Full Vindication of the Measures of the Congress"—A broad treatment of the most important questions involved—The Farmer's fourth pamphlet, "An Alarm to the Legislature of the Province of New York"—His fifth pamphlet advertised April 20, 1775, but never published.

VI.—The "Westchester Farmer's" gifts for controversial authorship—His extraordinary literary power—The delight and the anger produced by his pamphlets.

VII.—The "Westchester Farmer" was Samuel Seabury, rector of St. Peter's, Westchester—His early history—Personal traits—The dangers incurred by him on account of these pamphlets—His abduction by a mob—His imprisonment in New Haven—Subsequent persecutions—His flight within the British lines—His work as clergyman and physician till the close of the war—First bishop of the American Episcopal Church.

I.

THE first Continental Congress, being in secret session at Philadelphia from the fifth of September till the twenty-

sixth of October, 1774, took final resolution as to the course of action then to be pursued by the "United Colonies of America," in opposition to the offensive measures of the ministry. In order to win for this course of action, as far as possible, the moral support of mankind, the Congress sent forth a series of state papers, which proved to be writings of extraordinary dignity, nobility, and force:—"A Declaration of Rights and Grievances,"[1] an "Address to the People of Great Britain,"[2] a "Memorial to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies,"[3] an "Address to the Inhabitants of Quebec,"[4] and a "Petition to the King's Most Excellent Majesty."[5]

These were the state papers which, being laid on the table of the house of lords, became, on the twentieth of January, 1775, the subject of a memorable discussion in that body. "When your lordships look at the papers transmitted us from America," said Lord Chatham on that occasion; "when you consider their decency, firmness and wisdom, you cannot but respect their cause, and wish to make it your own. For myself, I must declare and avow, that in all my reading and observation—and it has been my favorite study—I have read Thucydides, and have studied and admired the master-states of the world—for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion, under such a complication of difficult circumstances, no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the General Congress at Philadelphia. I trust it is obvious to your lordships, that all attempts to impose servitude upon such men, to establish despotism over such a mighty continental nation, must be vain, must be fatal."[6]

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[1] "Journals of the American Congress," i. 19–22. This paper was prepared by a committee consisting of twenty-five members.

[2] Ibid. 26–31. This paper was written by John Jay.

[3] Ibid. 31–38. This paper was written by Richard Henry Lee.

[4] Ibid. 40–45. This paper was written by John Dickinson.

[5] Ibid. i. 46–49. This paper, in its original form, was written by Richard Henry Lee; in the form as adopted, it was written by John Dickinson.

[6] Hansard, "Parlimentary History of England," xviii. 155–156 n.

That the impression produced on Lord Chatham by these celebrated papers was not exceptional, might be shown from other contemporaneous European testimony. Thus, immediately after their arrival in Great Britain, the "Edinburgh Advertiser" for December 23, 1774, printed them in a supplement, and at the same time declared that, being "written with so much spirit, sound reason, and true knowledge of the constitution," they "have given more real uneasiness than all the other proceedings of the Congress."

A writer in the "London Public Ledger," for about the same date, bore this testimony as to the effect of these papers upon himself: "I look on the dignity of the American Congress as equal to any assembly on earth, and their deliberations and resolutions more important in their nature and consequences than any which were ever before agitated in council." As to the estimate placed on these papers in the immediate vicinity of the court, a letter written from London, and printed in the "Boston Morning Post" for March 27, 1775, said: "It is impossible that any production could have done more honor to America, or gained more universal approbation."[1]

II.

Within the seven weeks of its session, and behind those closed doors which so well protected the privacy of the Congress, was fought out, among the political chiefs of America, the final issue between the advocates of the two rival methods for conducting American opposition to a ministerial policy which was disliked by all Americans—by Tories as well as by Whigs. Either method of opposition, it was affirmed by its supporters, would be effectual in ultimately relieving us of the offensive policy; but, while the moderate method would be likely to accomplish this result without violence, and perhaps without bitterness, the extreme method could not fail, under existing circumstances,

[1] R. Frothingham, "Rise of the Republic," 408–409 n.

to lead to still greater exasperation between the contending parties, to civil war, and to revolution. Then and there, however, was defeated the plan for a constitutional and a peaceful solution of the problems in dispute,—defeated, it should be remembered, by a majority of only one vote.

The method of opposition thus officially chosen, was primarily that of a commercial war with Great Britain, to be brought on by means of a universal stoppage in America of every kind of trade with her,—this to be enforced throughout the colonies by agencies of terrific energy penetrating not only every community, but every household, not to say the private habits and the private opinions of every man and woman in the land. Moreover, the declaration of this commercial war with Great Britain was accompanied by the grim hint that a war other than a merely commercial one was not unlikely to ensue upon this, and, hence, that all good Americans should extend their "views to mournful events, and be, in all respects, prepared for every contingency."[1]

Finally, for a proper appreciation of the robust character and unflinching purpose of the method of procedure which the Congress thus adopted, and which it virtually enforced upon the American people, no secondary description can compare in value with the very text of the document itself —"The Association"—which was subscribed by the fifty-two members then present in that assemblage, and which was then distributed among the people for a similar endorsement by them. After recounting the grievances resulting from the "ruinous system of colony-administration, adopted by the British ministry about the year 1763, evidently calculated for enslaving these colonies, and, with them, the British empire," the paper at once proceeds to the tremendous topic of remedy: "To obtain redress for these grievances, which threaten destruction to the lives, liberty, and property of his majesty's subjects in North America, we are of opinion, that a non-importation, non-consumption, and

[1] "Journals of the American Congress," i. 38.

non-exportation agreement, faithfully adhered to, will prove the most speedy, effectual, and peaceable measure; and, therefore, we do for ourselves and the inhabitants of the several colonies whom we represent, firmly agree and associate, under the sacred ties of virtue, honor, and love of our country, as follows:

"1. That from and after the first day of December next, we will not import into British America, from Great Britain or Ireland, any goods, wares, or merchandise whatsoever, or from any other place any such goods, wares, or merchandise as shall have been exported from Great Britain or Ireland; nor will we, after that day, import any East India tea from any part of the world, nor any molasses, syrups, paneles, coffee, or pimento from the British plantations or from Dominica, nor wines from Madeira or the Western Islands, nor foreign indigo.

. . . . . .

"3. As a non-consumption agreement, strictly adhered to, will be an effectual security for the observation of the non-importation, we, as above, solemnly agree and associate, that from this day we will not purchase or use any tea imported on account of the East India Company, or any on which a duty hath been or shall be paid; and from and after the first day of March next, we will not purchase or use any East India tea whatever, nor will we, nor shall any person for or under us, purchase or use any of those goods, wares, or merchandise, we have agreed not to import, which we shall know, or have cause to suspect, were imported after the first day of December.

"4. The earnest desire we have not to injure our fellow-subjects in Great Britain, Ireland, or the West Indies, induces us to suspend a non-exportation, until the tenth day of September, 1775; at which time, if the said acts and parts of acts of the British parliament hereinafter mentioned, are not repealed, we will not directly or indirectly export any merchandise or commodity whatsoever to Great Britain, Ireland, or the West Indies, except rice to Europe.

. . . . . .

"11. That a committee be chosen in every county, city, and town, by those who are qualified to vote for representatives in the legislature, whose business it shall be attentively to observe the conduct of all persons touching this Association; and when it shall be made to appear, to the satisfaction of a majority of any such committee, that any person within the limits of their appointment has violated this Association, that such majority do forthwith cause the truth of the case to be published in the gazette; to the end, that all such foes of the rights of British America may be publicly known and universally contemned as the enemies of American liberty; and thenceforth we respectively will break off all dealings with him or her.

. . . . . .

"14. And we do further agree and resolve, that we will have no trade, commerce, dealings, or intercourse whatsoever, with any colony or province in North America, which shall not accede to, or which shall hereafter violate, this Association, but will hold them as unworthy of the rights of freemen, and as inimical to the liberties of their country."[1]

III.

Within two or three weeks from the day on which the Congress announced its grand scheme for an agreement among the American colonists not to import or to consume the chief materials of the English carrying-trade, nor to export the chief products of their own farms, there came from the press of New York a pamphlet, ostensibly written by a farmer, and addressed to farmers, and from the level of their particular interests subjecting the proposal of Congress to a sort of criticism that was well fitted to arouse against it the bitterest and most unrelenting opposition of the great agricultural class. This is its title: "Free Thoughts on the Proceedings of the Continental Congress, held at Philadel-

[1] "Journals of the American Congress," i. 23–26.

phia September 5, 1774: Wherein their Errors are exhibited, their Reasonings confuted, and the Fatal Tendency of their Non-Importation, Non-Exportation, and Non-Consumption Measures are laid open to the plainest Understandings, and the Only Means pointed out for preserving and securing our present happy Constitution."

The writer of this pamphlet professed to be a "Westchester Farmer,"—a signature which at once became the target for vast applause and for vast execration. Entering the great debate not as a lawyer, nor as a politician, nor as a merchant, but only as a farmer—an educated farmer, certainly, but a blunt and a sturdy one—the tremendous impression produced by him was partly due to his dramatic identification of himself with the character he had assumed —expertly adopting the Doric phrases, the rustic prejudices, even the bucolic jests natural to a brawny and manly yeoman who has read and thought much on the laws of the land, who knows his rights as an English American, who loves his country, who hates needless change and every disturbance of industry, and is indignant at seeing the prosperity, even the rights and the liberties of the people, especially those of his own class, uptorn and set in peril by the unwise and audacious interference of political adventurers. Here, accordingly, the reader need look for nothing recondite, or high-flown, or fine-spun, no over-strained sentimentality, no rapture of idealized opinion, but a simple, practical, pedestrian view of the situation, such as any stalwart farmer might present to his brother farmers. Here, also, may the Son of Sirach encounter a surprise, in the discovery that even wisdom is to be had from one that holdeth the plough and that glorieth in the goad, that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labors, and whose talk is of bullocks.

"My first business," says this stout-hearted farmer to his brethren, "shall be to point out to you some of the consequences that will probably follow from the non-importation, non-exportation, and non-consumption agreements which" the late Congress "have adopted, and which they have

ordered to be enforced in the most arbitrary manner, and under the severest penalties. On this subject, I choose to address myself to you, the farmers of the province of New York, because I am most nearly connected with you, being one of your number, and having no interest in the country but in common with you; and also because the interest of the farmers in general will be more sensibly affected and more deeply injured by these agreements, than the interest of any other body of people on the continent." [1]

Of these agreements, probably one consequence will be a great disturbance of business in Great Britain, Ireland, and the West Indies, accompanied by wide-spread distress in all those countries,—by discord, confusion, mobs, riots, insurrections, rebellions. True, this consequence may not at first affect us; but even if it do not, where is the justice, where is the policy, in our taking measures which are likely to bring such misfortune upon others? "The manufacturers of Great Britain, the inhabitants of Ireland and of the West Indies have done us no injury. They have been no ways instrumental in bringing our distresses upon us. Shall we then revenge ourselves upon them?" [2] Of course, instead of conciliating them, we shall only alienate them: of friends, we shall make them enemies. "The passions of human nature are much the same in all countries. If they find us disposed wantonly to distress them, to serve our own purposes, will they not look out for some method to do without us? Will they not seek elsewhere for a supply of those articles which they used to take from us? They would deserve to be despised for their meanness, did they not." Thus, this proposed measure of the Congress will seriously damage our interests as farmers,—for example, it will ruin our market for flaxseed, for which our best customers have always been the Irish. "You know, my friends, that the sale of your seed not only pays your taxes, but furnishes you with many of the little conveniences and

[1] "Free Thoughts," etc., 4. I use the first edition, "Printed in the Year M.DCC.LXXIV."

[2] "Free Thoughts," etc., 5.

comforts of life. The loss of it for one year would be of more damage to you, than paying the three-penny duty on tea for twenty. Let us compare matters a little. It was inconvenient for me this year to sow more than one bushel of seed. I have threshed and cleaned up eleven bushels. The common price now is at least ten shillings. My seed, then, will fetch me five pounds ten shillings. But I will throw in the ten shillings for expenses. There remain five pounds: in five pounds, are four hundred three-pences. Four hundred three-pences, currency, will pay the duty upon two hundred pounds of tea,—even reckoning the exchange with London at 200 per cent., that is, reckoning 100*l.* sterling to be equal to 200*l.* currency; whereas, in fact, it is only equal to 175*l* or 180*l.* at the most. I use in my family about six pounds of tea. Few farmers in my neighborhood use so much; but I hate to stint my wife and daughters, or my friendly neighbors when they come to see me. Besides, I like a dish of tea too, especially after a little more than ordinary fatigue in hot weather. Now, 200 pounds of tea, at six pounds a year, will last just 33 years and eight months. So that, in order to pay this monstrous duty on tea, which has raised all this confounded combustion in the country, I have only to sell the produce of a bushel of flaxseed once in thirty-three years. Ridiculous!

"But, to leave jesting. The loss of the sale of your seed only for one year, would be a considerable damage to you. And yet the Congress have been so inattentive to your interests, that they have laid you under almost an absolute necessity of losing it the next year. They have decreed and proclaimed a non-exportation, to commence in September next. The Irish will be alarmed: they will look out somewhere else. Or, should they determine to send their ships the earlier, we cannot, without the utmost inconvenience, get our seed to market by that time,—especially not from the remoter parts of the province. The consequence will be, that we must sell our seed at the oil mills in New

York, just at the price the manufacturers shall please to give us.

"Upon the whole, then, it is highly improbable that we shall succeed in distressing the people of Great Britain, Ireland, and the West Indies, so far as to oblige them to join with us in getting the acts of parliament, which we complain of, repealed. The first distress will fall on ourselves: it will be more severely felt by us, than by any part of all his majesty's dominions; and it will affect us the longest."[1]

But this is only the beginning of the misfortunes which are coming upon us should the scheme of the Congress go into effect. Not only will it lower the market for the things we have to sell, but it will raise it for the things we have to buy. Even now, "many of you find it difficult at the year's end to pay the shopkeeper for what the necessities of your families have obliged you to take up. What will you do when the prices of goods are advanced a quarter, for instance, or a half?" Moreover, what will happen next? Why, that this scheme of the Congress, after throwing us into all these embarrassments, will put the finishing touch to them, by provoking the home government to block up our ports. Of course, this means the cessation of all our trade. And even if the home government should not do this, the Congress will—only in a different way; for they have decreed that within the next ten months all our trade is to be stopped anyhow. In either case, then, the result of this Congressional interference will be the same. "Should the government interpose, we shall have no trade at all, and consequently no vent for the produce of our farms. Such part of our wheat, flaxseed, corn, beef, pork, butter, cheese, as was not consumed in the province, must be left to rot and stink upon our hands. Should the government leave us to ourselves, the little trade that would be open, would never keep these articles at such a price as to make it worth while to raise more of them than we want for our own consumption." Therefore, "look well to your-

[1] "Free Thoughts," etc., 7–8.

selves, I beseech you. From the day that the exports from this province are stopped, the farmers may date the commencement of their ruin. Can you live without money? Will the shopkeeper give you his goods? Will the weaver, shoemaker, blacksmith, carpenter, work for you without pay? If they will, it is more than they will do for me. And unless you can sell your produce, how are you to get money? Nor will the case be better if you are obliged to sell your produce at an under-rate; for then it will not pay you for the labor and expense of raising it. But this is the least part of the distress that will come upon you.

"Unhappily, many of you are in debt, and obliged to pay the enormous interest of seven pounds on the hundred, for considerable sums. It matters not whether your debts have been contracted through necessity or carelessness: you must pay them, at least the interest, punctually. The usurer will not wait long; indeed, you cannot expect he should. You have had his money, and are obliged in justice to pay him the principal and interest according to agreement. But without selling your produce, you can neither pay the one nor the other. The consequence will be that after a while a process of law will be commenced against you, and your farms must be sold by execution; and then you will have to pay not only principal and interest, but sheriff's fees, lawyer's fees, and a long list of et cæteras. Nor, under these circumstances, will your farms fetch half what they cost you. What is a farm good for, the produce of which cannot be sold? . . . Your creditor, then, or some rich merchant, or usurer, must take it at their own price. To you it is of no consequence who takes it—for you are ruined, stripped of your farm, and very probably of the means of subsistence for yourself and family. Glorious effect of non-exportation! Think a little, and then tell me—when the Congress adopted this cursed scheme, did they in the least consider your interest? No, impossible! They ignorantly misunderstood, carelessly neglected, or basely betrayed you! . . . Blessed fruits of non-importation

and non-exportation! The farmer that is in debt will be ruined. The farmer that is clear in the world, will be obliged to run in debt, to support his family; and while the proud merchant, and the forsworn smuggler, riot in their ill-gotten wealth, the laborious farmers, the grand support of every well-regulated country, must all go to the dogs together. Vile, shameful, diabolical device!" [1]

Not even yet is the case complete, as against the scheme of the Congress. All these disasters are to follow from only one part of that scheme. Let us now attend to another part of it, namely, that relating to non-consumption. "After the first of March, we are not to purchase or use any East India tea whatsoever, nor any goods, wares, or merchandise from Great Britain or Ireland . . . nor any molasses, syrups, etc., from the British plantations in the West Indies, or from Dominica, nor wine from Madeira or the Western Islands, nor foreign indigo.

"Will you submit to this slavish regulation? You must: our sovereign lords and masters, the high and mighty delegates, in grand Continental Congress assembled, have ordered and directed it! They have directed the committees in the respective colonies to establish such further regulations as they may think proper for carrying their association . . . into execution. . . . Will you be instrumental in bringing the most abject slavery on yourselves? Will you choose such committees? Will you submit to them, should they be chosen by the weak, foolish, turbulent part of the country people? Do as you please; but, by Him that made me, I will not! No, if I must be enslaved, let it be by a KING at least, and not by a parcel of upstart, lawless committeemen. If I must be devoured, let me be devoured by the jaws of a lion, and not gnawed to death by rats and vermin! . . . If you like it better, choose your committee, or suffer it to be chosen by half a dozen fools in your neighborhood: open your doors to them—let them examine your tea canisters, and molasses jugs, and your wives' and

[1] "Free Thoughts," etc., 9–17.

daughters' petticoats—bow, and cringe, and tremble, and quake—fall down and worship our sovereign Lord, the Mob! But, I repeat it, by Heaven I will not! No, my house is my castle: as such I will consider it, as such I will defend it, while I have breath. No king's officer shall enter it without my permission, unless supported by a warrant from a magistrate. And shall my house be entered, and my mode of living enquired into, by a domineering committee-man? Before I submit, I will die: live you, and be slaves.

"Do, I say, as you please; but should any pragmatical committee-gentleman come to my house, and give himself airs, I shall shew him the door, and if he does not soon take himself away, a good hickory cudgel shall teach him better manners."[1]

"But perhaps you will say that these men are contending for our rights; that they are defending our liberties; and though they act against law, yet that the necessity of the time will justify them. . . . These men defend our rights and liberties? . . . No, they are making us the most abject slaves that ever existed. The necessity of the times justify them in violating the first principles of civil society? Who induced this necessity? Who involved the province in discord, anarchy, and confusion? They created that necessity, which they now plead in their own justification.

"Let me entreat you, my friends, to have nothing to do with these men, or with any of the same stamp. Peace and quietness suit you best. Confusion, and discord, and violence, and war, are sure destruction to the farmer. . . . Peace, indeed, is departed from us for the present, and the protection of the laws has ceased. But, I trust in God, there is yet one method left, which by prudent management will free us from all our difficulties, restore peace again to our dwellings, and give us the firm security of the laws for our protection. Renounce all dependence on congresses and committees. They have neglected or betrayed your interests. Turn, then, your eyes to your constitu-

[1] "Free Thoughts," etc., 13–19.

tional representatives. They are the true, and legal, and have been hitherto the faithful, defenders of your rights and liberties; and you have no reason to think but that they will ever be so. They will probably soon meet in general assembly. Address yourselves to them. They are the proper persons to obtain redress for any grievances that you can justly complain of. You can trust their wisdom and prudence, that they will use the most reasonable, constitutional, and effectual methods of restoring that peace and harmony between Great Britain and this province, which is so earnestly wished for by all good men, and which is so absolutely necessary for the happiness of all." [1]

Thus, then, into the arena of the great debate leaped this fearless intellectual gladiator. To right and to left were dealt his tremendous blows—to the ground tumbled many an antagonist—far and fierce rang shouts of exultation, or howls of anger and hate. Can he hold his own at this great pace? Can he keep up for long this superb fighting?

IV.

The first pamphlet of the "Westchester Farmer" was dated November 16, 1774. Twelve days from that date came his second one—as keen, as fiery, as powerful as the first: "The Congress Canvassed [2]; or, An Examination into the Conduct of the Delegates at their Grand Convention, held in Philadelphia, September 1, 1774." Addressing now the merchants of New York, even as in his first pamphlet he had addressed its farmers, he declines to offer any apology for laying his opinions before them: "You must be content with plain English, from a plain countryman: I must have the privilege of calling a fig—a fig, an egg—an egg." [3]

[1] "Free Thoughts," etc., 22–23.

[2] In a list of the pamphlets of the "Westchester Farmer," as given by the author of them, probably from memory, in 1783, he mentions one as being "An Address to the Merchants of New York." I have not met with any pamphlet of his having that for its chief title; while the pamphlet above cited is declared, on its title-page, to be "Addressed to the Merchants of New York." I think that this, therefore, is the pamphlet intended.

[3] "The Congress Canvassed," 3.

From first to last, then, he preserves the tone and bearing of a blunt, unterrified farmer, but with a mastery of eloquent statement, and of philosophy, history, politics, and constitutional law, not commonly to be met with in men of his class—or of any class. Launching out into a wider range of discussion than he had previously taken, he yet holds himself steady to his main purpose of exposing what he regards as the imposture, the assumption, the tyranny, and the folly of the late Congress. It was a law-making body unknown to the law or to the constitution of the country; its members had no real claim to represent the government or the people of their several provinces; in many cases their election was a sham, in all cases invalid; the doctrines they have put forth are unsound, misleading, dangerous; from beginning to end, the measures they have undertaken to force upon the people, are without authority, are tyrannical, will bring on unspeakable calamity.

As to their doctrines, all run back to this new and shallow heresy, that the allegiance of the American colonies is due to the king alone, and not to the parliament. "It is a distinction made by the American republicans to serve their own rebellious purposes,—a gilding with which they have enclosed the pill of sedition, to entice the unwary colonists to swallow it the more readily down. The king of Great Britain was placed on the throne by virtue of an act of parliament; and he is king of America by virtue of being king of Great Britain. He is, therefore, king of America by act of parliament. And if we disclaim that authority of parliament which made him our king, we, in fact, reject him from being our king,—for we disclaim that authority by which he is king at all.

"Let us not, gentlemen, be led away from our duty and allegiance by such fantastical distinctions. They are too nice and subtile for practice, and fit only for Utopian schemes of government. We have so long paid attention to sophistical declamations about liberty and property, the power of government and the rights of the people, the force of laws and the benefit of the constitution, that we have very little

of any of them left among us; and if we continue to support and imitate the mad schemes of our Eastern neighbors, in the manner we have done, in a very short time we shall have none at all." [1]

Indeed, it would be most fortunate if the doctrines promulgated by the Congress were merely false in theory: for they will surely prove most disastrous in practice. "We have hitherto proceeded from bad to worse. It is time to consider and correct our conduct. As yet, it has done us no good: if persisted in too far, it will bring ruin upon us. It is our duty to make some proposals of accommodation with our parent country. And they ought to be reasonable ones,—such as might be made with safety on our part, and accepted with dignity on hers. But if we expect to oblige her to propose a reconciliation, to ask and entreat us to accept of such and such terms, to force her to concede everything, while we will concede nothing,—if we are determined to proceed as we have done, continually rising in our demands and increasing our opposition,—I dread to think of the consequence. The authority of Great Britain over the colonies must cease, or the force of arms must finally decide the dispute. Many Americans are hardy enough to suppose that, in such a contest, we should come off victorious. But horrid indeed would be the consequence of our success! We should presently turn our arms on one another, province against province, and destruction and carnage would desolate the land. Probably it would cost the blood of a great part of the inhabitants of America to determine what kind of a government we should have, whether a monarchy or a republic. Another effusion of blood would be necessary to fix a monarch, or to establish the commonwealth. But it is much more probable, that the power of the British arms would prevail; and then, after the most dreadful scenes of violence and slaughter, confiscations and executions must close the horrid tragedy." [2]

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[1] "The Congress Canvassed," 26.

[2] Ibid. 26–27.

V.

Such was the second pamphlet of the "Westchester Farmer." In the meantime, his first pamphlet had already caused great commotion in the camp of the radical party. It could not be suffered to go unanswered. Answers, accordingly, sprang up on every hand,—the most notable one being "A Full Vindication of the Measures of the Congress, from the Calumnies of their Enemies," by a writer whose name was then concealed, but who is now known to have been Alexander Hamilton—"the marvellous boy"—then but seventeen years of age and an undergraduate of King's College. On the twenty-fourth of December, 1774, in less than four weeks from the day of his second pamphlet, the undaunted farmer was ready with a third one,—this being in reply to Hamilton's attack, and entitled "A View of the Controversy between Great Britain and her Colonies: Including a Mode of determining their present Disputes finally and effectually, and preventing all future Contentions." The method of this pamphlet is that of a strong fighter conscious of having come into close quarters with an antagonist worthy of him: he is self-possessed, wary, expert, full of resource, aroused, determined, watching to give the thrust which shall kill. Here, again, the range of the discussion is still further widened; and, indeed, the whole vast question then at issue between England and America, in its every aspect of constitutional law, of equity, of general expediency, is here discussed by this masterful farmer, and discussed with learning, acuteness, lucidity, with occasional bursts of stormy eloquence, with no little cleverness of humorous and sarcastic phrase. Here, likewise, as in every other pamphlet by the same writer, care is taken to keep prominent the fact that the American opponents of revolutionary measures are themselves dissatisfied with the existing relations of America toward the parent state; and that, while they reject the disloyal and exasperating remedy proposed by the Congress, they are not without a remedy of their own, namely, "the settlement of an

American constitution "[1] providing for colonial home-rule under the sovereign authority of the imperial parliament. "This is a scheme which we shall probably succeed in, if we attempt it with proper prudence and temper."[2] "If we grasp at too much, we shall lose everything."[3] "This scheme will secure us from slavery, and too abject a dependence on our fellow-subjects in England."[4] At the same time, "the dependence of the colonies on the mother country, will be fixed on a firm foundation; the sovereign authority of parliament over all the dominions of the empire, will be established; and the mother country and all her colonies will be knit together in one grand, firm, and compact body."[5] "You, sir, may, if you please, pride yourself in this suspicious, jealous, parsimonious, stingy, contracted, disposition of the Congress; you may call it 'equity,' 'wisdom,' 'dignity.' Be it my glory to have contributed, even in the smallest degree, to the honor, splendor, and majesty of the British empire. My ancestors were among the first Englishmen who settled in America. I have no interest but in America. I have not a relation out of it that I know of. Yet, let me die! but I had rather be reduced to the last shilling, than that the imperial dignity of Great Britain should sink, or be controlled by any people or power on earth."[6]

No sooner was this pamphlet off his hands, and a stunning blow thus given to his chief assailant, than the "Westchester Farmer" seems to have set to work upon his fourth pamphlet, wherein, turning away from all unauthorized political bodies—congresses, committees, associations, and the like—he addresses himself most solemnly to the one political body in the province which had any legal character, and was competent, besides, to interpose in that frightful emergency, and to lead all good citizens into a line of action certain to result in a manly, free, and loyal solution of their

[1] "A View of the Controversy," etc., 23.
[2] Ibid. 21.
[3] Ibid. 22.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid. 21.
[6] Ibid. 23

difficulties. The pamphlet thus sent forth to the world had this title: "An Alarm to the Legislature of the Province of New York, occasioned by the present political Disturbances in North America: addressed to the honorable Representatives in General Assembly convened." [1]

Although they are, as he tells them, the only legal representatives of the people of the province, yet they have of late been utterly disregarded, their dignity trampled on, their authority contravened. "A committee, chosen in a tumultuous, illegal manner, usurped the most despotic authority over the province. They entered into contracts, compacts, combinations, treaties of alliance, with the other colonies, without any power from the legislature of this province." [2] "A foreign power is brought in to govern this province. Laws made at Philadelphia, by factious men from New England, New Jersey, Pennyslvania, Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas, are imposed upon us by the most imperious menaces. Money is levied upon us without the consent of our representatives,—which very money, under color of relieving the poor of Boston, it is too probable, will be employed to raise an army against the king. Mobs and riots are encouraged, in order to force submission to the tyranny of the Congress." [3] "To you, gentlemen, the good people of this province look for relief: on you they have fixed their hopes; from you they expect deliverance from this intolerable state of slavery. . . . If you assert your own dignity, if you maintain your own rights and privileges, we shall again be a free and happy, and, I trust, not an ungrateful people. . . . If laws made and decrees passed at Philadelphia, by the enthusiastic republicans of New England and Virginia, are to bind the people of this province, and extort money from them, why, gentlemen, do you meet? Is it barely to register their edicts, and to rivet the fetters of their tyranny on your constituents?

[1] This pamphlet was not signed; but it has all the characteristic traits of the "Westchester Farmer," and was afterward avowed by him as his.

[2] "An Alarm," etc., 4–5.

[3] Ibid. 7.

. . . Your duty requires you to interpose your authority, and to break up this horrid combination of seditious men, which has already enslaved this province, and which was intended to draw the faithful subjects of our most gracious sovereign into rebellion and civil war." [1]

The date of this fourth pamphlet is January 17, 1775. On the twentieth of the following April,—only one day after the ghastly business at Lexington and Concord, but several days before the story of it could have reached New York,—there appeared in the "New York Gazetteer" the advertisement of still another pamphlet by a "Westchester Farmer," as "speedily to be published." This pamphlet was to have had for its title, "The Republican Dissected; or, The Anatomy of an American Whig." It is not unlikely that the events of the nineteenth of April, as the tidings of them flew across the land, may have seemed to the public to be so literal and realistic a presentation of the very theme undertaken by this intended pamphlet, that its publication was prudently withheld.[2] At any rate, no copy of it is known to exist.

VI.

Without doubt, the pamphlets of the "Westchester Farmer" which thus came from the press in swift succession, reveal in their writer extraordinary gifts for authorship—particularly for popular controversial authorship. In the course of that long and savage debate, some pamphlets were written even on the same side, more learned than these, more elaborate and more deliberate in their treatment of constitutional law, more conciliatory in tone, more elegant in style; but no other pamphlets on the Loyalist side, and

[1] "An Alarm," etc., 7–8.

[2] In a note by Dr. T. B. Chandler written in a copy of "The Farmer Refuted," it is stated that "The Republican Dissected" was a rejoinder to that pamphlet, but was not published because, "by a sudden and unexpected revolution, the liberty of the press was totally destroyed, and nothing could be printed on the side of government." Paul Leicester Ford, "Bibliotheca Hamiltoniana," 5.

perhaps the pamphlets of but one writer[1] on the side of the Revolutionists, were a match for these writings of the "Westchester Farmer" for immediate effect upon the mass of readers in a time of violent stir and commotion. Indeed, the purely literary merits of these essays are such as to entitle them to a high and a permanent reputation in the literature of the American Revolution. Even now, no one can fail to find pleasure in them, who delights in genuine English — pure, Saxon, sinewy; in a style that moves straight to the mark, every epithet a flash of fire, every sentence a spear-point; in pages all alive, and charged to the full with force or humor or satire, with telling illustration, with picturesqueness, with repartee, with outbursts of eloquent indignation, with bravuras of patriotic enthusiasm or scorn. Probably no pamphlets more readable, none more witty and brilliant, none argumentatively more effective, were called forth on either side of the question during the whole controversy. Even after the lapse of a hundred years, and after the facts of history have set at naught the dire prophecies of the "Westchester Farmer," and have made void his logic, and have covered his political philosophy with the contempt commonly given to futile things, any person properly acquainted with the historic situation out of which these pamphlets sprang into life, may still find for himself the secret of their original power, may still feel in his own soul something of the enormous effects they wrought, as they first swept through the country, and overpowered every reader, and carried him along in a mighty flood of sympathetic argument and passion, or else set him awrithing with intellectual anguish—disconcerted him, maddened him—by their magnificent championship of political doctrines which he loathed.

VII.

As to the authorship of these celebrated pamphlets, the popular suspicion almost immediately fastened upon Samuel

[1] I refer to Thomas Paine.

Seabury, at that time rector of the parish of St. Peter, in Westchester; forty-five years of age, a native of Connecticut, a graduate of Yale College, himself descended from some of the earliest settlers in New England—including John Alden; after the Revolution, renowned as the first bishop of the American Episcopal Church. Although in the present century and by many American scholars, the glory or the shame of having written the essays of the "Westchester Farmer" has been awarded to others—to Chandler, to Inglis, to Myles Cooper, and particularly to Isaac Wilkins—it has at last been placed beyond dispute that the contemporaneous popular instinct, which attributed these essays to Samuel Seabury, was correct.[1]

As the actual cultivator of the glebe attached to his benefice, Seabury had a literal claim to his assumed title of "Westchester Farmer." He was a man builded after an heroic pattern: a man of powerful frame, of robust health, of tremendous energy—physical, mental, moral; of great and varied experience in the affairs of life; a physician, a theologian, a scholar; a terse and vigorous writer; an orator of impassioned and commanding speech; his mind firmly made up to clear and reverent conclusions on all

[1] In the first place, it is not true, as is sometimes said, that Seabury himself ever denied that he was the author of the "Westchester Farmer" pamphlets. While in peril of his life at New Haven in 1775, he did plead "not guilty" to the charge of having written "pamphlets and newspapers against the liberties of America"; but that description did not, in his opinion, apply to the pamphlets of the "Westchester Farmer," which, as he always insisted, were on behalf of "the liberties of America," and not against them. Seabury's "Memorial," in Beardsley, 38–39. During the same imprisonment, when the authorship of those particular pamphlets was by name charged upon him, he refused to disavow them, although, as he wrote soon afterward, such disavowal would have occasioned his speedy release. Letter by Seabury, in Beardsley, 45–46. In the second place, while Seabury never denied their authorship, he did expressly lay claim to it, and that under circumstances of great seriousness. In the year 1783, being then in London seeking consecration as bishop, he submitted a memorial to the commissioners appointed by the British government to consider the claims of the American Loyalists; and in that memorial he declares himself to be the author of the pamphlets of the "Westchester Farmer," the titles of which he gives. I have had in my hands Seabury's manuscript first

the great subjects that man, either alone or in society, has to deal with. Moreover, there were in Seabury a singular courage of opinion, a downrightness of utterance, a necessity for the frank and emphatic expression of whatsoever convictions were within him, an inability to dodge important issues, or to shuffle off responsibility, or to shirk a painful duty; with all this, too, a grave and manly prudence, entire freedom from frothy zeal, or from light-headed impetuosity, or from ambition for social martyrdom.

Almost at once after the appearance of his first pamphlet, the "Westchester Farmer" began to be threatened with dire vengeance. Not being able to lay their hands upon his person, some of those who were incensed at him gathered up copies of his pamphlets, and burned them at the stake; or, covering them with a coat of tar and feathers, they nailed them to a whipping-post,—all as a dramatic intimation of the sort of treatment which he himself might expect, should he fall into their hands.[1]

Within a year from the date of the first of his pamphlets, the public anger against Seabury, especially in the colony of Connecticut, had risen to such a pitch as to lead to a bold and a perfectly lawless plan for suppressing him by force—possibly, even for putting him to death. On Wed-

draft of this memorial, still in the possession of the Reverend Professor W. J. Seabury, of the General Theological Seminary in New York; and it has since been printed in full in "The Magazine of American History," viii. 119–121. In the third place, in the year 1797, one year after Seabury's death, his authorship of these pamphlets was expressly re-affirmed by one of his most intimate and most confidential friends, the Reverend Jonathan Boucher, in "A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution," 556–557 n. Finally, the only person who, besides Seabury, has been in our time regarded as having any serious claim to this authorship, is Isaac Wilkins; but in his memorial, entitled "My Services and Losses," etc., edited by Paul Leicester Ford, Brooklyn, 1890, while stating freely what he had done "in aid of the king's cause during the American Revolution," he makes no mention of having been even in part the author of the "Westchester Farmer" pamphlets. I think it may fairly be said that, among persons who have seen all the evidence, the question as to the authorship of these pamphlets is no longer an open one.

[1] "What Think Ye of the Congress Now?" 4–5; E. E. Beardsley, "Life of Seabury," 28–29.

nesday, the 22d of November, 1775, while engaged in the beneficent duties of his calling, he was suddenly seized, like a malefactor, by a band of armed men acting without any color of authority—excepting that of mob-law. The place of his arrest was at some distance from his home,—at a little school-house, where he was just then at work among his pupils. As he was being dragged away from it, towards the rectory, he was met by one of his daughters, who, in great terror, with hat torn from her head and hair hanging disheveled over her shoulders, had fled to him from their home. A dreadful story she had to relate to her father, of an experience unexampled, we may be well assured, in that orderly community, in that virtuous and honored household. These armed men, it seems,—mostly strangers in the village and even in the colony,—had at first gone straight to the rectory, which they had rudely entered—demanding the person of its master. Not finding him there, they had insulted and terrified his daughters, in the effort to compel them to say where their father could be found,—thrusting a bayonet through the cap of one of them, piercing with a bayonet the handkerchief about her neck, and pushing a bayonet against her bosom, with a threat to kill her; the men likewise amusing themselves by tossing and tearing with their bayonets the needlework on which the young ladies had been engaged. From this scene of outrage, one of the daughters had escaped, and had fled for help in the direction of her father,—but only to find him overpowered and a prisoner in the hands of about forty of the same band of men who had taken possession of his house.

And now hurried thither by these men, he was given merely time to send for his horse; and this interval his captors used in compelling his wife to open his desk, which they ransacked at will—peering into his most private papers, carrying off the money which they found there—besides pillaging the house of silver spoons, and such other valuable articles as these sons of liberty were able to lay their hands on. As soon as his horse was brought to him, the reverend

prisoner was forced to mount, and to go off with his captors; and, in gross violation of every legal right, he was conducted across the borders of his own colony into Connecticut, and taken to New Haven. Through the streets of that city he was borne in insulting triumph, by a large number of men on horseback and in carriages; and after much shouting, and firing of cannon, he was committed as a close prisoner to the care of four or five guards; he was denied all visits from friends except in the presence of his guards; he was deprived the use of pen, ink, and paper, except for the purpose of writing to his family, and then only under the inspection of his captors; he was refused the sight of all letters from his family, excepting in one instance, where, however, the letter had been already broken open and read before it was handed to him.[1]

The principal charge against Seabury was, that he had written the pamphlets of the "Westchester Farmer." After more than a month's imprisonment, and in default of evidence to prove that charge, his guards were taken off, and he was allowed to return to his home. Thenceforward, as much as possible he had to avoid appearing upon the streets, always to sleep elsewhere than in his own house, never to be at home even by day for more than an hour or two at a time, and to have faithful friends constantly on the watch to warn him of approaching danger. At one time, under stress of extraordinary danger, he and his friends, Chandler of New Jersey, and Myles Cooper, the president of King's College, were forced to flee for their lives; and, for several days and nights, they lay in the old Wilkins mansion on Castle Hill Neck, where they were hidden in a secret room, in the upper part of the house, behind a chimney—their food and drink being conveyed to them from time to time through a trap-door in the floor.[2] In the

[1] My account of Seabury's arrest and imprisonment is based chiefly on his own testimony, as given in his memorial to the general assembly of Connecticut. Beardsley, "Life of Seabury," 36–42.

[2] R. Bolton, Jr., "Hist. of the P. E. Church in the County of Westchester," 86.

spring of 1776, when the American soldiers began moving from the neighborhood of Boston towards New York, "bodies of them," as Seabury then wrote, "consisting of twenty or thirty men, would, every day or two, sometimes two or three times a day, come through Westchester, though five miles out of their way, and never failed to stop at my house, I believe only for the malicious pleasure of insulting me by reviling the king, the parliament, Lord North, the church, the bishops, the clergy, and the society, and, above all, that vilest of all miscreants, a 'Westchester Farmer.' One would give one hundred dollars to know who he was, that he might plunge his bayonet into his heart; another would crawl fifty miles to see him roasted."[1]

Of course, no human strength could bear a pressure like this for very long. After the battle of Long Island, and the occupation of his neighborhood by soldiers, it became necessary for Seabury to flee for his life into the British lines. Then complete wreck and desolation fell upon his parish. A troop of cavalry were quartered in the rectory, and "consumed all the produce of his glebe"; the pews of the church were wrenched out and burned for firewood; the church itself was turned into a hospital; and "the whole region for thirty miles around was pillaged and laid waste by the marches and depredations, sometimes of one army and sometimes of the other."[2] Once within the British lines, Seabury was, of course, safe from physical outrage —from the insults of armed partisans, from the menaces of mobs; and at headquarters, as was to be expected, he was admitted into confidence and honor. In New York he remained till the close of hostilities, practising his profession as a physician to men's bodies, and losing no opportunity to serve them, also, in his higher capacity as a physician to sick and troubled souls. In 1778, by Sir Henry Clinton he was made a chaplain in the army, and assigned to a regiment of American Loyalists.[3] Finally, in the spring of the

[1] Letter by Seabury, 29 December, 1776, in Beardsley, 45–47.

[2] Beardsley, 49–50.

[3] Ibid. 53–54.

year 1783—a year so exhilarating to a majority of the American people, so sad and so fatal to a minority of them, but a minority in part composed of men as noble as ever manned a forlorn hope or went down for a sacred idea—a little company of clergymen, assembled in a lonely parsonage at Woodbury, Connecticut, solemnly designated Samuel Seabury as the first bishop of the American Episcopal Church, and requested him to go to England for consecration.[1] At that time, and to the mass of the American people, the man thus chosen for bishop was probably the most obnoxious clergyman of any religious denomination, to be found in all the thirteen States. But the great trust thus laid upon him, Seabury accepted; the burdens of it he bore for many years with singular wisdom, energy, patience, fidelity, success; and when, in the latter part of Washington's second term in the presidency, Seabury laid down his office with his life, a multitude of persons who formerly hated him, had come to pay him honor, as one of a sort of men always likely to be much needed in this part of the world—men who, for a cause they believe to be right, are capable of sacrificing public favor, private comfort, even life itself.

[1] Beardsley, 76–79.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LOYALISTS IN ARGUMENT AGAINST THE MEASURES OF THE FIRST CONGRESS: "MASSACHUSETTENSIS."

I.—The letters of "Massachusettensis," December, 1774-April, 1775—John Adams's high estimate of their literary power—Previous career of their author, Daniel Leonard—Satirized by Mercy Warren as "Beau Trumps"—John Adams suggests a corrupt motive in his politics.

II.—The intellectual and moral notes in "Massachusettensis"—The writer's avowal of the purity and patriotism of his motives—His denunciation of the arts of demagogues.

III.—The tone and method of "Massachusettensis" suited to the argumentative and law-respecting character of the people addressed by him—His denial that the British government had overstepped its constitutional limits—The several topics discussed by him.

IV.—Examples of his acuteness and literary skill in controversy—The groundlessness of the prevailing political complaints—Committees on grievances our worst grievance—Where are the traces of our political servitude?—The tyranny of the champions of American liberty—The inevitable approach of war—The inevitable triumph of the British in such a conflict.

V.—The author of the letters of "Massachusettensis" a victim of popular violence—Personal outrages upon him and his family—His banishment—His property confiscated—His later career in Bermuda and England.

I.

NOT many weeks after the "Westchester Farmer" had, in one of the principal towns of the Middle Colonies, opened fire on the measures promulgated by the first Continental Congress, a series of attacks upon them, somewhat different in method but almost equally powerful, was begun in the chief city of New England by a writer who became famous under the name of "Massachusettensis." His papers, seventeen in number, were in the form of letters addressed "To the Inhabitants of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay," and first appeared in a Boston newspaper[1] between

[1] "The Massachusetts Gazette and Post Boy," then conducted for the Loyalist side by Nathaniel Mills and John Hicks.

the middle of December, 1774, and the middle of April, 1775.[1] More than forty years afterward, John Adams bore witness to the impression which these essays originally made upon him, by saying that, on his return from the first Continental Congress late in the year 1774, he had found the letters of "Massachusettensis" "shining" among the Tory writings of that neighborhood "like the moon among the lesser stars."[2] A more discriminating, even if less picturesque, indication of their effectiveness was given by the same vigorous writer in a memorandum attached to his "Diary" for the year 1774: "These papers were well written, abounded with wit, discovered good information, and were conducted with a subtlety of art and address wonderfully calculated to keep up the spirits of their party, to depress ours, to spread intimidation, and to make proselytes among those whose principles and judgment give way to their fears,—and these compose at least one-third of mankind."[3]

The literary champion who, concealing his identity[4]

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[1] The importance of these essays was immediately recognized by friends and foes. They were reprinted in a large pamphlet in Boston, in 1775; also in New York, in the same year; and both in Boston and in London, in 1776. My citations are from this London reprint, which has a preface of its own, and a title-page also well adapted to its place and time: "Massachusettensis, or, a Series of Letters, containing a faithful State of many important and striking Facts, which laid the Foundation of the present Troubles in the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay; interspersed with Animadversions and Reflections, originally addressed to the People of that Province, and worthy the Consideration of the true Patriots of this Country. By a Person of Honor upon the Spot."

[2] "Novanglus and Massachusettensis," Pref. vi. John Adams here fixes the time at which he found the letters of "Massachusettensis" thus "shining," as on "his return from Congress in the month of November, 1774"; but those letters did not begin to "shine" until after the 12th of December.

[3] "The Works of John Adams," ii. 405.

[4] So well, in fact, did he conceal his identity, that John Adams, who was an intimate friend of Leonard and who became the chief public enemy of "Massachusettensis," seems not to have supposed that the two were one: at least, with his usual emphasis he says that, as soon as he saw the letters of "Massachusettensis," he "knew" them to be by his friend Jonathan Sewall. "Novanglus and Massachusettensis," Pref. vi. In this state of blissful knowledge he re-

behind the visor of "Massachusettensis," dashed thus gallantly into the lists of political controversy,—unseating many a burly antagonist, and with his mighty lance bringing rescue and courage to many a dismounted and disheartened friend,—was Daniel Leonard, then thirty-four years of age, a graduate of Harvard, scion of an old and opulent family in the province, as lawyer and politician noted for the acuteness, energy, and eloquence with which he was accustomed to contend for his own view of things. At that period of his life, also, he seems to have had an extraordinary fondness for finery in dress and for social display,—a trait in him which was set forth by Mercy Warren in her comedy of "The Group," wherein Leonard figures under the name of "Beau Trumps." Indeed, according to the never-hesitant and ever-gossiping John Adams, it was through this very love of splendor and of the wealth needful to support it, that Leonard was gradually seduced from his original sympathy with the politics of the Revolution: "He wore a broad gold lace round the rim of his hat, he made his cloak glitter with laces still broader, he had set up his chariot and pair and constantly traveled in it from Taunton to Boston. This made the world stare—it was a novelty. Not another lawyer in the province, attorney or barrister, of whatever age, reputation, rank, or station, presumed to ride in a coach or a chariot. The discerning ones soon perceived that wealth and power must have charms to a heart that delighted in so much finery, and indulged in such unusual expense. Such marks could not escape the vigilant eyes of the two arch-tempters, Hutchinson and Sewall, who had more art, insinuation, and address than all the rest of their party."[1]

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mained for nearly fifty years—until, in the year 1821, he was confronted by evidence which compelled him to admit that his great foeman was not Jonathan Sewall after all, but Daniel Leonard. "Works of John Adams," iv. 10. Of course, from the start he had been aware that some people attributed the letters to Leonard. Ibid. ii. 405.

[1] Ibid. x. 194–195.

II.

Whatever may be thought of this imputation of vanity and greed, as explaining Daniel Leonard's divergence from the political course taken by John Adams, certain it is that the letters of "Massachusettensis" bear no traces either of a shallow or of a sordid nature: a disinterested reader of them would be likely to say that they express high cultivation, strong judgment, and courageous moral thoughtfulness. As some offset to John Adams's disparaging account of Leonard's motives, it is only fair to note his own declaration upon that subject. In the third number of "Massachusettensis," he alludes to the curiosity which even then was asking who the writer of those essays might be: "I will tell you: it is a native of this province, that knew it before many, that are now basking in the rays of political sunshine, had a being. He was favored, not by Whigs or Tories but by the people, with such a stand in the community, as that he could distinctly see all the political manœuvres of the province. He saw some with pleasure, others with pain. If he condemns the conduct of the Whigs, he does not always approve of the conduct of the Tories. . . . He is now repaying your favors, if he knows his own heart, from the purest gratitude and the most undissembled patriotism—which will one day be acknowledged. I saw the small seed of sedition, when it was implanted: it was as a grain of mustard. I have watched the plant until it has become a great tree: the vilest reptiles that crawl upon the earth, are concealed at the root; the foulest birds of the air rest upon its branches. I now would induce you to go to work immediately with axes and hatchets, and cut it down, for a two-fold reason,—because it is a pest to society, and lest it be felled suddenly by a stronger arm, and crush its thousands in the fall."[1]

Indeed, it was not at all necessary—even if it were courteous and fair—to suggest a corrupt consideration on Leon-

[1] "Massachusettensis," 25–26.

ard's part, in order to explain a course of political conduct which logically followed from his point of view—a point of view in itself quite as rational and as honorable as that very opposite one which was then held by his literary assailant. As John Adams's writings down to the close of the Revolution breathe the spirit of political radicalism and of a somewhat extreme democracy, so these writings of Leonard's—like those of John Adams himself after the Revolution—breathe the spirit of political conservatism, together with a contempt and an abhorrence for the arts by which the people are often led astray into folly and crime. "Popular demagogues," says Leonard, "always call themselves 'the people,' and when their own measures are censured, cry out,—'The people, the people are abused and insulted.'"[1] "There is a propensity in men to believe themselves injured and oppressed, whenever they are told so."[2] "Great allowances are to be made for the crossings, windings, and tergiversations of a politician: he is a cunning animal."[3] "We often read resolves denying the authority of parliament, . . . gilded over with professions of loyalty to the king; but the golden leaf is too thin to conceal the treason."[4] "He that would excite a rebellion, whatever professions of philanthropy he may make when he is insinuating and worming himself into the good graces of the people, is at heart as great a tyrant as ever wielded the iron rod of oppression."[5]

III.

The handling of the argument in these essays was exactly suited to the people addressed, and to the alarming condition of their affairs. They were a law-abiding people: they were also an argumentative people. They had inherited, and they still cherished, the great English traditions concerning authority—as a thing very necessary and sacred, but as a

[1] "Massachusettensis," 114. [2] Ibid. 12–13. [3] Ibid. 38.
[4] Ibid. 56. [5] Ibid. 17.

thing limited: authority itself being subject to authority, namely, the authority of those constitutional barriers which define its operation. To them it seemed as needful for government to yield obedience to the law over it, as to require obedience to the law under it. They were good subjects, therefore, so long as they were convinced that government was setting them an example of obedience by wielding its power within those barriers which reason and justice had prescribed: when not so convinced, these good subjects were apt to become good rebels. The success of the Revolutionary agitators thus far, had been largely due to their skill in convincing the people that government had lost its claims by overstepping its limits.

It was this state of the case that Leonard perfectly understood: his countrymen were on the verge of rebellion—nay, they were actually in rebellion—but it was upon a theory which, in their eyes, took from rebellion all its criminality. Their rebellion was justifiable, because, as they thought, the acts of the government were unjustifiable. The great business of Leonard, therefore, was to convince them that they had been misinformed, that they were misled; that they were rushing onward under a frightful error and delusion; that the government had not overstepped its limits; that though some of its recent acts may have been bad in policy, not one of them was unconstitutional; that these acts contained no menace to the political safety, dignity, or happiness of the American colonists; that everything of value to them in character, duty, property, and life itself, was involved in their speedily discovering their mistake, casting off the sophists and demagogues who had beguiled them, and becoming once more good subjects of the just and splendid empire within which lay all their hopes for prosperity and happiness. Accordingly, so distributing these various topics as to mingle history, anecdote, warning, sympathy, sarcasm, invective, with acute discussions of constitutional law, of equity, of the higher aspects of policy, he shows great skill in knocking away, or in seeming to knock

away, piece by piece, the argumentative structure under cover of which the Revolutionary agitators had succeeded in drawing a loyal and a logical people into courses of action both disloyal and dangerous. That the authority of the imperial parliament is and must be coextensive with the empire itself [1]; that its authority in the American colonies is not invalidated by the circumstance that distance from the capital renders it impracticable for them to send members to parliament [2]; that no recent assertion of the taxing power of parliament is new—is, in fact, anything but what has been peacefully exercised and safely granted from the beginning [3]; that such taxation is contained in the very terms of the original settlement of the colonies [4]; that in the doctrine of the supremacy of parliament, according to the British constitution, is wrapped up our priceless claim to all the great rights and privileges of British subjects under that constitution—the rejection of the former carrying with it the destruction of the latter [5]; that no American petitions to the imperial government have ever yet been rejected, excepting such as were so framed as to compel their rejection on the part of any government that had the least respect either for the constitution or for itself [6]; that what are called American grievances are largely imaginary [7]—are charges trumped up by demagogues and conspirators [8] as their stock in trade while fattening upon the generous confidence of a people noble-minded but misinformed, and rushing toward misery and ruin,—such are the matters principally dealt with by this consummate debater.

Of course, the real weight and worth of his arguments in support of these several propositions, can be judged only after a thorough reading of them. Meantime, even from snatches and fragments of the discussion, we may form some notion of the literary power with which he states them, of

[1] "Massachusettensis," 39, 40–45. [2] Ibid. 43–44.
[3] Ibid. 9–10, 40, 82–83. [4] Ibid. 40–41. [5] Ibid. 41–43.
[6] Ibid. 104–5. [7] Ibid. 70, 74–75, 102–103.
[8] Ibid. 8–15, 17, 20, 21, 24, 76, 105–7.

the epigrammatic point, the wit, the dash, the shrewdness with which he presses them home.

IV.

Thus, the real goundlessness of the prevailing political complaints, is an essential part of his view of the whole case, and one of his strong contentions. "Perhaps the whole story of empire does not furnish another instance of a forcible opposition to government, with so much specious and so little real cause."[1] "Is it not a most astonishing instance of caprice or infatuation, that a province, torn from its foundations, should be precipitating itself into a war with Great Britain, because the British parliament asserts its right of raising a revenue in America,—inasmuch as the claim of that right is as ancient as the colonies themselves? The parliament's refusing to repeal the tea act is the ostensible foundation of our quarrel. If we ask the Whigs, whether the pitiful three-penny duty upon a luxurious, unwholesome, foreign commodity gives just occasion for the opposition, they tell us, 'it is the precedent they are contending about'—insinuating that it is an innovation. But this ground is not tenable; for a total repeal of the tea act would not serve us upon the score of precedents. They are numerous without this. The Whigs have been extremely partial respecting tea. Poor tea has been made the shibboleth of party, while molasses, wine, coffee, indigo, etc., etc., have been unmolested. A person that drinks New England rum distilled from molasses subject to a like duty, is equally deserving of a coat of tar and feathers with him that drinks tea. A coffee-drinker is as culpable as either, viewed in a political light. 'But,' say our patriots, 'if the British parliament may take a penny from us without our consent, they may a pound, and so on, till they have filched away all our property.' This incessant incantation operates like a spell or a charm, and checks the efforts of loyalty in many

[1] "Massachusettensis," 39.

an honest breast. Let us give it its full weight. Do they mean that if the parliament has a right to raise a revenue of one penny on the colonies, they must therefore have a right to wrest from us all our property? If this be their meaning, I deny their deduction; for the supreme legislature can have no right to tax any part of the empire to a greater amount than its just and equitable proportion of the necessary national expense. This is a line drawn by the constitution itself. Do they mean that, if we admit that the parliament may constitutionally raise one penny upon us for the purposes of revenue, they will proceed from light to heavy taxes, till their impositions become grievous and intolerable? This amounts to no more than a denial of the right, lest it should be abused. But an argument drawn from the actual abuse of power, will not conclude to the illegality of such power; much less will an argument drawn from the capability of its being abused. I will admit that a power of taxation is more liable to abuse than legislation separately considered; and it would give me pleasure to see some other line drawn, some other barrier erected, than what the constitution has already done—if it be possible—whereby the constitutional authority of the supreme legislature might be preserved entire, and America be guaranteed in every right and exemption, consistent with her subordination and dependence. But this can only be done by parliament."[1] "It would be an endless task to remark minutely upon each of the fancied grievances that swarm and cluster, fill and deform, the American chronicles. An adeptness at discovering grievances has lately been one of the principal recommendations to public notice and popular applause. . . . We have had geniuses selected for that purpose, called 'committees upon grievances': a sagacious set they were, and discovered a multitude, before it was known that they themselves were the greatest grievances that the country was infested with."[2] "Where are the traces of slavery that our patriots would terrify us with?

[1] "Massachusettensis," 82–84.

[2] Ibid. 74–75.

The effects of slavery are as glaring and obvious in those countries that are cursed with its abode, as the effects of war, pestilence, or famine. Our land is not disgraced by the wooden shoes of France, or the uncombed hair of Poland. We have neither racks nor inquisitions, tortures nor assassinations. The mildness of our criminal jurisprudence is proverbial: 'A man must have many friends, to get hanged in New England.' Who has been arbitrarily imprisoned, disseized of his freehold, or despoiled of his goods? . . . My dear friends, let me ask each one, whether he has not enjoyed every blessing that is in the power of civil government to bestow? And yet the parliament has, from the earliest days of the colonies, claimed the lately controverted right both of legislation and taxation, and for more than a century has been in the exercise of it. There is no grievous exercise of that right at this day—unless the measures taken to prevent our revolting may be called grievances. Are we then to rebel lest there should be grievances? Are we to take up arms and make war against our parent, lest that parent, contrary to the experience of a century and a half, contrary to her own genius, inclination, affection, and interest, should treat us or our posterity as bastards, and not as sons, and instead of protecting, should enslave us? The annals of the world have not yet been deformed with a single instance of so unnatural, so causeless, so wanton, so wicked, a rebellion." [1]

As might be expected, this writer is too alert in the discovery of logical, and even sentimental, advantages to fail to turn against his antagonists the charge, that they, the champions of liberty, are themselves perpetrators of the grossest tyranny, in not allowing any but their own side of the controversy to have an open and a safe hearing; "that so many respectable persons have been abused, and forced to sign recantations and resignations; that so many persons, to avoid such reiterated insults as are more to be deprecated by a man of sentiment than death itself, have been obliged to

[1] "Massachusettensis," 102–103.

quit their houses, families, and business, and fly to the army for protection; that husband has been separated from wife, father from son, brother from brother, the sweet intercourse of conjugal and natural affection interrupted, and the unfortunate refugee forced to abandon all the comforts of domestic life. My countrymen, I beg you to pause and reflect on this conduct. Have not these people, that are thus insulted, as good a right to think and act for themselves in matters of the last importance, as the Whigs? Are they not as closely connected with the interest of their country, as the Whigs? Do not their former lives and conversations appear to have been regulated by principle, as much as those of the Whigs? You must answer—yes! Why, then, do you suffer them to be cruelly treated, for differing in sentiment from you? Is it consistent with that liberty you profess? . . . Do you expect to make converts by it? Persecution has the same effects in politics, that it has in religion: it confirms the sectary. Do you wish to silence them, that the inhabitants of the province may appear unanimous? The maltreatment they have received for differing from you, is an undeniable evidence that we are not unanimous. . . . It is astonishing, my friends, that those who are in pursuit of liberty, should ever suffer arbitrary power, in such an hideous form and squalid hue, to get a footing among them."[1]

In his last letter, which was finished sixteen days before the clash of arms at Lexington and Concord, the writer seems burdened, even as he had been in his first letter, written four months earlier, by a clear prescience of that tragic event which, as John Adams said, changed "the instruments of warfare from the pen to the sword."[2] "The English nation will bear much from its friends; but whoever has read its history must know, that there is a line that cannot be passed with impunity. It is not the fault of our patriots, if that line be not already passed. They have

[1] "Massachusettensis," 35–36.

[2] "The Works of John Adams," ii. 405.

demanded of Great Britain more than she can grant consistent with her honor, her interest, or our own, and are now brandishing the sword of defiance. Do you expect to conquer in war?"[1] "Can any of you that think soberly upon the matter, be so deluded as to believe that Great Britain, who so lately carried her arms with success to every part of the globe, triumphed over the united powers of France and Spain, and whose fleets give law to the ocean, is unable to conquer us?"[2] "Those that unsheath the sword of rebellion may throw away the scabbard. . . . The conquered in other wars do not forfeit the rights of men, nor all the rights of citizens; even their bravery is rewarded by a generous victor. Far different is the case of a routed rebel host."[3]

V.

Although, at the time of their first publication, Daniel Leonard was only suspected to be the author of these terrible letters of "Massachusettensis," he had otherwise done enough to entitle himself to the distinction of suffering that personal violence which, as he himself charged, was then inflicted by the champions of liberty upon those who took the liberty to differ from them in opinion. His own house in the little town of Taunton proved to be no longer his castle: bullets were fired into it by a mob of his political enemies. With his family, consisting of eight persons, he then fled for safety to Boston, and there he remained till its evacuation by the British army in March, 1776. He was among the refugees who accompanied the army to Halifax. In the lists of citizens whom the State of Massachusetts denounced to banishment[4] in September, 1778, and to confiscation of property[5] in April, 1779, his name was

[1] "Massachusettensis," 116. [2] Ibid. 5. [3] Ibid. 117.

[4] The act is given entire in the appendix to Curwen's "Journal and Letters," 438–443.

[5] The confiscation act is given in Curwen, 434–436.

included. From Halifax he went to England, where he was rewarded with the office of chief-justice of Bermuda. In London he died in 1829, at the age of eighty-nine.[1]

[1] Sabine, "Loyalists of the Am. Rev.," ii. 10–12; "Appleton's Cycl. of Am. Biog.," sub. nom.; Curwen's "Journal and Letters, 548.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE LOYALISTS IN ARGUMENT AGAINST THE MEASURES OF THE FIRST CONGRESS: JOSEPH GALLOWAY.

I.—Joseph Galloway's preëminence as a Loyalist writer and statesman—His early activity in the politics of Pennsylvania—Associated in personal and political friendship with Franklin—His enmity to John Dickinson and the proprietary government of Pennsylvania—His "Speech" in 1764 ridiculed by Dickinson.

II.—Galloway comes into general prominence at the time of the first Continental Congress—Represents in that body the Americans who desired to secure American rights but without revolutionary violence—His "Plan of a Proposed Union between Great Britain and the Colonies"—Fragments of his speeches in Congress in support thereof.

III.—The rejection by Congress of Galloway's "Plan" marks the parting of the ways between the conservative and the revolutionary opponents of parliamentary taxation—Galloway declines a reëlection to Congress—Appeals from the adverse decision of the Congress to the higher tribunal of public opinion—Publishes early in 1775 "A Candid Examination of the Mutual Claims of Great Britain and the Colonies"—The shocking violations of American liberty by the champions of American liberty—The controversy a dispute between the supreme authority of the state and some of its members—Outline of his argument touching the rights of America and the best way to secure them.

IV.—Great immediate influence of Galloway's pamphlet—Whatever its merits, it comes too late—His noble appeals swept out of sight by Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill—Galloway, following his convictions, enters the British lines in the autumn of 1776—His important services therein—Seeks refuge in England in the autumn of 1778—His death there in 1803.

V.—Galloway's activity as a writer on American affairs not diminished by his residence in England—His pamphlets, there produced, fall into three groups—First, the constitutional and political issues of the controversy—Secondly, the American Revolution as a physical conflict—Thirdly, the motives, services, and sacrifices of the American Loyalists.

I.

A LOYALIST writer of less vigor than Seabury, of less agility and sparkle than Daniel Leonard, but probably of

greater practical effect than either, was Joseph Galloway,[1] who shared with Thomas Hutchinson the supreme place among American statesmen opposed to the Revolution, and who persisted in his literary activity against that movement until its success was beyond the possibility of doubt. Indeed, by a recent American critic[2] Galloway has been characterized as "the giant and corypheus of the Loyalist pamphleteers."

He was born in Kent County,[3] Maryland, in 1731, of a family settled in that province in the early part of the reign of Charles the First, and possessed of large landed property there. Having established himself in Philadelphia for the practice of the law, he attained while still a young man considerable distinction both as a barrister and as a politician. From 1757 until 1774, he was, almost without interruption, a member of the assembly of Pennsylvania, and during the last nine years of that period he was its speaker. In the embittered conflicts then raging in the colony between the friends and enemies of the proprietary government, Galloway stood among its enemies—striving in close union with Franklin to bring about a transfer of the province from the control of the Penn family to that of the crown.

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[1] An adequate biography of Galloway is much to be desired: it would be invaluable for the removal of much obscurity and injustice still prevailing in the popular conception of the American Revolution. The sketch of him in Sabine's "Loyalists of the American Revolution," i. 453–457, is exceptionally weak, inaccurate, and unfair. For the chief events of his life, the best materials now available are Galloway's own answers to certain personal questions put to him during his celebrated "Examination" by a committee of the house of commons in 1779; the notes inserted by Thomas Balch in a reprint of this "Examination," Philadelphia, 1855; a note by J. Francis Fisher in "The Works of Benjamin Franklin," Sparks's ed., vii. 276–277; and the published correspondence of Galloway's contemporaries, especially of Franklin, Dickinson, John Adams, and Joseph Reed.

[2] The late George Henry Moore, in a letter to the author.

[3] With respect to the place and date of Galloway's birth, the mistakes made by J. Francis Fisher in his note to the seventh volume of Franklin's "Works," published in 1838, were pointed out by Thomas Balch in 1855, in a note to page 43 of Galloway's "Examination." The author of the sketch of Galloway in "Appleton's Cyclopædia of American Biography," ii. 581–582, seems to have trusted to Fisher's note, without taking account of Balch's corrections of it.

It was in connection with this movement—probably the only popular movement on behalf of which he was ever engaged—that he first came into public notice as a writer, publishing at Philadelphia in 1764 a "Speech" made by him in the assembly, in support of a resolution asking "his majesty to resume the powers of government into his own hands."[1] This publication is of some interest still, not only for its evidence as to Galloway's intellectual quality at that period of his career, but as a symptom of the early and sharp divergence between him and John Dickinson. His "Speech" appears to have been printed without much revision, possibly from the rough notes jotted down by him as an aid in the delivery of it,—a fact which gave occasion for Dickinson's gibe at his "continual breaches of the rules of grammar, his utter ignorance of the English language, the pompous obscurity and sputtering prolixity reigning through every part of his piece, and his innumerable and feeble tautologies."[2] Certainly, these memoranda are clumsy enough in form, but they are not otherwise weak; indeed, they indicate genuine argumentative power, solidity, sobriety, statesmanlike breadth and grasp of reasoning.

II.

Not until the time of the first Continental Congress, did Galloway come into prominence beyond the limits of his own colony. Like all of the American Loyalists, he had deprecated the unwise course of the English ministry in their treatment of the American colonies, from the time of the act for laying stamp duties, onward to that for shutting up the port of Boston. Nevertheless, Galloway held that

[1] "The Speech of Joseph Galloway," etc., 3. It is characteristic of the place and the time that, in order to reach a portion of the inhabitants of Pennsylvania too important to be disregarded, this "Speech" was circulated in German also: "Die Rede Herrn Joseph Galloways, eines der Mitglieder des Hauses," u. s. w. "Aus dem Englischen übersetzt. Philadelphia, gedruckt und zu finden bey Heinrich Miller, in der Zweiten-strasse."

[2] "A Reply to a Piece called a Speech of Joseph Galloway, Esq.," Appendix, 49–50.

all these bitter incidents were an inevitable result of the lack of a proper constitutional organization of the American colonies within the general system of the British empire. In order to suppy this lack in a statesmanlike manner,— that is, in order to frame a permanent constitution for the American colonies, under which all disagreements between them and the parent state could be quietly and wisely dealt with,—he introduced into the Continental Congress, on the twenty-eighth of September, 1774, his famous "Plan of a Proposed Union between Great Britain and the Colonies."

This was simply a scheme for American home rule, on a basis of colonial confederation, with an American parliament to be elected every three years by the legislatures of the several colonies, and with a governor general to be appointed by the crown. Galloway's spirit in bringing forward this plan may partly be inferred from some fragments of his remarks in support of it, as preserved in notes taken on the spot by John Adams:—"I am as much a friend of liberty as exists; and no man shall go further in point of fortune, or in point of blood, than the man who now addresses you." "We want the aid and assistance and protection of the arm of our mother country. Protection and allegiance are reciprocal duties. Can we lay claim to the money and protection of Great Britain upon any principles of honor or conscience? Can we wish to become aliens to the mother state?" "We must come upon terms with Great Britain. Some gentlemen are not for negotiation. I wish I could hear some reason against it." "In every government—patriarchal, monarchical, aristocratical, or democratical—there must be a supreme legislature." "I know of no American constitution: a Virginia constitution, a Pennyslvania constitution, we have;—we are totally independent of each other." "Is it not necessary that the trade of the empire should be regulated by some power or other? Can the empire hold together without it? No. Who shall regulate it? Shall the legislature of Nova Scotia or Georgia regulate it? Massachusetts, or Virginia? Pennsylvania or New

York? It can't be pretended. Our legislative powers extend no further than the limits of our governments. Where then shall it be placed? There is a necessity that an American legislature should be set up, or else that we should give the power to parliament or king."[1]

This sagacious scheme of Galloway's, which virtually anticipated the British statesmanship of the subsequent century in the solution of the British colonial problem, came very near to adoption. It was strongly supported in Congress by James Duane and John Jay; it was pronounced by Edward Rutledge to be "almost a perfect plan"; in the final trial, it was lost only by a vote of six colonies to five. Had it been adopted, the disruption of the British empire by an American schism would certainly have been averted for that epoch, and, as an act of violence and of hereditary unkindness, would perhaps have been averted forever; while the English colonies in America would have remained English colonies, without ceasing to be free.[2]

III.

The rejection by the first Continental Congress of this noble-minded measure for a practicable and permanent union between the American colonies and the mother country, seemed to Galloway to denote a final parting of the ways between himself and many of his old political colleagues; to be an indication, also, that the American politicians who had thus succeeded in carrying the vote of

[1] "The Works of John Adams," ii. 388–391.

[2] In giving an account of Galloway's scheme I have used, with some modifications, a few sentences from my book on "Patrick Henry," 102. No copy of Galloway's "Plan," nor any allusion to it, was allowed to appear in the "Journals" of Congress. The text of it was published at the time in newspapers; it is to be found stitched in with some pamphlets of the time, as the one entitled "What think ye of the Congress Now?"; it was reproduced entire in Galloway's pamphlet called "A Candid Examination," etc., 53–54, as well as in another famous pamphlet, called "Observations on the Reconciliation of Great Britain and the Colonies"; and it is now easily accessible in 4 "Am. Arch.," i. 905–906.

Congress against him would be likely to impress upon that body a course of action which, as he thought, was intended to lead to a violent rupture with England, and to an effort at separation. Declining an election to the second Continental Congress, where his presence would have been of little avail, and would even have involved him in serious misconstruction, he thenceforward devoted himself in an independent position to the effort to avert, if possible, the final adoption by his fellow-colonists of a policy having in his eyes every aspect of illegality, of unwisdom, of public and private misfortune.

Under these circumstances it was that, early in the year 1775, he published his first notable piece of work as a pamphleteer,[1]—"A Candid Examination of the Mutual Claims of Great Britain and the Colonies: With a Plan of Accommodation on Constitutional Principles."[2] It is probable that he had set to work on this pamphlet shortly after the rejection of his "Plan" by the first Continental Congress. At any rate, it is an avowed appeal from the adverse decision of that body to the higher tribunal of public opinion. After an impressive preamble, in which he depicts a condition of affairs in America, not only anomalous but shocking

[1] Besides his "Speech," in 1764, and his "Plan," in 1774, his hand may be traced in two slight publications prior to the serious one now referred to—"To the Public," 1764; "Advertisement . . . To the Public," 1765. Each of these was printed on a single leaf, in Philadelphia, and each relates to his personal concern with current political controversies. In 1765, he dealt with the questions raised by the Stamp Act, doing so in a "piece" published over the signature of "Americanus." "The Works of Benjamin Franklin," Sparks's ed., vii. 304. In January, 1766, he wrote to Franklin, with whom he was then on terms not only confidential but affectionate, that he had nearly finished a pamphlet entitled "Political Reflections on the Dispute between Great Britain and her Colonies respecting her Right of imposing Taxes on them without their Assent." Ibid. I have found no evidence that he ever published this pamphlet. Possibly it was the basis for the one published by him in London in 1780, entitled "Historical and Political Reflections on the Rise and Progress of the American Rebellion."

[2] It is a sign of the great effect of this pamphlet, that it was reprinted in many forms both in America and in England. I here use the first edition printed by Rivington in New York in 1775.

in any community pretending to be controlled by law,— "freedom of speech suppressed, the liberty and secrecy of the press destroyed, the voice of truth silenced, a lawless power established throughout the colonies . . . depriving men of their natural rights and inflicting penalties more severe than death itself,"—he avows his determination then and there to lay before his countrymen a faithful and fearless review of "the most important controversy that ever was agitated between a state and its members."[1] What is the standard by which such a controversy can be decided? Surely, that standard is not found by those who have undertaken to deduce the political rights of America from "the laws of God and nature," from "the common rights of mankind," or from the "American charters." Neither is it to be discovered by exploring those ingenious and fanciful distinctions which have been made between "a right in parliament to legislate for the colonies and a right to tax them, between internal and external taxation, and between taxes laid for the regulation of trade and for the purpose of revenue."[2] All these attempts to find the true standard by which to decide the controversy have been futile, for the reason that they have been sought in disregard of the true nature of that controversy. What, then, is its nature? "It is a dispute between the supreme authority of the state and a number of its members,"[3] as to the limits of authority on the part of the former and of obedience on the part of the latter. The very nature of the dispute, therefore, shows that the true standard for its settlement is to be sought in the principles of government in general and of the British constitution in particular. Well, then, in every state there must be "a supreme legislative authority, universal in extent," and affecting every member of the state.[4] Within the British empire, such authority resides in parliament. Are the American colonies members of the British empire, or are they not? After a long and learned presentation of

[1] "A Candid Examination," etc., 1, 2.
[2] Ibid. 2–3.
[3] Ibid. 3.
[4] Ibid. 4.

the evidence for and against the proposition, he concludes that they are.[1] With this conclusion, however, it is impossible to reconcile the claim of the Congress that in all cases of taxation and of internal police, the colonies have exclusive control, subject only to the negative of the sovereign.[2] That this is so, he argues at great length and with great force. Congress, therefore, was wrong in having rejected the "Plan" which was submitted to it, for so organizing the constitution of the colonies as to open a path "to a lasting and happy reconciliation." Instead of this beneficent result, "nothing has been the production of their two months' labor, but the ill-shapen, diminutive brat—Independency!" But Independency means ruin. If England refuses it, she will ruin us: if she grants it, we shall ruin ourselves.[3]

Having thus set forth the rights of parliament, and the fatal consequences that must result from our refusal to recognize them, he next turns to consider the rights of America,—a task which he performs "with ineffable pleasure, as he is pleading a cause founded on the immutable principles of reason and justice—the cause of his country and the latest posterity."[4] What are the rights of America?—whence derived?—how has their exercise been lost?—how can they be recovered? The rights of America are derived from the British constitution. They include those of protection, not only from foreign powers, but from domestic injustice as well—especially from "the arbitrary and lawless power of the state, and of every subordinate authority."[5] Furthermore, it is of the essence of the British constitution that from the earliest times the government has derived "its power from the landed interest," and that the proprietors of the land have "shared the power of making their laws,"[6] a principle which, for convenience, has been developed into the representative system.[7] But, with respect to this ancient English right, how stands the case

[1] "A Candid Examination," etc., 24. [2] Ibid. 30. [3] Ibid. 31–32.
[4] Ibid. 33. [5] Ibid. 34. [6] Ibid. 35–36. [7] Ibid. 39.

on behalf of the English proprietors of land in America? Certainly, they do not enjoy it; they have never enjoyed it; but they ought to enjoy it,—they ought to enjoy it "in such manner as their circumstances admit of, whenever it shall be decently and respectfully asked for."[1] "The subjects of a free state, in every part of its dominions, ought in good policy to enjoy the same fundamental rights and privileges. Every distinction between them must be offensive and odious, and cannot fail to create uneasiness and jealousies which will ever weaken the government, and frequently terminate in insurrections,—which, in every society, ought to be particularly guarded against. If the British state, therefore, means to retain the colonies in a due obedience on her government, it will be wisdom in her to restore to her American subjects the enjoyment of the right of assenting to and dissenting from such bills as shall be proposed to regulate their conduct. Laws thus made will ever be obeyed, because by their assent they become their own acts. It will place them in the same condition with their brethren in Britain, and remove all cause of complaint; or if they should conceive any regulations inconvenient or unjust, they will petition, not rebel. Without this, it is easy to perceive that the union and harmony, which is peculiarly essential to a free society whose members are resident in regions so very remote from each other, cannot long subsist. The genius, temper, and circumstances of the Americans should be also duly attended to. No people in the world have higher notions of liberty. It would be impossible ever to eradicate them,—should an attempt so unjust be ever made. Their late spirit and conduct fully prove this assertion, and will serve as a clue to that policy by which they ought to be governed. The distance of America from Britain, her vast extent of territory, her numerous ports and conveniences of commerce, her various productions, her increasing numbers, and consequently her growing strength and power, when duly considered, all point out the policy

[1] "A Candid Examination," etc., 41.

of uniting the two countries together upon principles of English liberty. Should this be omitted, the colonies will infallibly throw off their connection with the mother country. Their distance will encourage the attempt; their discontent will give them spirit; and their numbers, wealth, and power, at some future time, will enable them to effect it."[1]

What, then, is to be done? Undoubtedly, the Americans are laboring under grievances which ought to have redress; but Congress is wrong in the mode it has proposed for obtaining such redress. There is a right mode—it is that of redress through a liberal constitutional union with the mother state.[2] "Had this measure been adopted in the year 1766, in all probability the rights of America would have been restored, and the most perfect harmony would have this day subsisted between the two countries."[3] "Great pains have been taken by the American demagogues to delude the unhappy people whom they have doomed to be the dupes of their ambition, into a belief that no justice was to be obtained of his majesty and his houses of parliament, and that they had refused to hear our most reasonable petitions. . . . It is high time that this fatal delusion should be exposed, and the good people of America disabused. It is true that his majesty and the two houses of parliament have treated petitions from the colonies with neglect; but what were those petitions? Did they rest on a denial of the essential rights of parliament, or did they ask for the rights of the subject in America? . . . They disowned the power of the supreme legislature, to which as subjects they owe obedience."[4] "Is it too late to recover from our madness, and to pursue the dictates of reason and duty? By no means. But it is high time we had changed our measures, and retreated from the dangers with which we are threatened. Let us, like men who love order and government, boldly oppose the illegal edicts of the Congress, before it is too late,—pull down the licentious tyranny they

[1] "A Candid Examination," etc., 42–43.
[2] Ibid. 48–49.
[3] Ibid. 49.
[4] Ibid. 49–50.

have established, and dissolve their inferior committees—their instruments to trample on the sacred laws of your country, and your invaluable rights. This done, and peace and order restored within your several provinces, apply to your assemblies, who are your constitutional guardians and can alone procure a redress of your grievances. Entreat them, in a respectful and dutiful manner to petition his majesty and his two houses of parliament, and in their petitions to assure them—'That you are sensible of the necessity of a supreme legislature over every member of the state; that you acknowledge yourselves subjects of the British government; that you have, through innumerable difficulties and perils, settled and improved a wilderness, extended the territories, and greatly increased the wealth and power of the nation; that by such settlement you have lost the enjoyment of, though not the right to, some of the first and most excellent of the privileges of Englishmen; . . . that no part of the lands in America . . . enjoy their ancient right of participating in the authority of parliament; . . . and therefore pray, that you may not only be restored to this capacity, but to all the rights of Englishmen, upon such principles of liberty and policy as shall best suit your local circumstances.'

"A petition of this kind, so reasonable and just, and so well founded and established on the principles of their own government, attended with such a plan of union as may be wisely digested by your several assemblies, there is no reason to doubt, will be graciously received and duly attended to by his majesty and his two houses of parliament, and finally terminate in a full redress of your grievances, and a permanent system of union and harmony, upon principles of liberty and safety."[1]

IV.

For the champions of extreme measures, Galloway's pamphlet became a somewhat troublesome document. More-

[1] "A Candid Examination," etc., 59–61.

over, with people of moderate and conservative tendencies, it was singularly persuasive by reason of the fact that it seemed to be something more than an academic and irresponsible discussion of its tremendous theme; and that, besides administering a dose of destructive criticism to the radical plans of the Revolutionary party, it was ready with a practical and statesmanlike plan as a substitute for them. Finally, an infallible token of its effectiveness was to be seen in the fact that it was accorded repeated rounds of literary abuse and refutation. Of only one of these, however, did Galloway take particular notice,—doing so in a tract, published in New York in the spring of 1775, called "Reply to an Address to the Author of a Pamphlet entitled A Candid Examination."

Whatever may have been the merits of Galloway's pamphlet, it had one fatal defect,—it was a good argument delivered at a bad time: in short, it was a brave attempt by words to stop and turn back the current of destiny. No spoken or written commentary upon his presentation of the case was so unanswerable as was that furnished by actual events soon after its publication,—more particularly those of Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill. After the flash and uproar of those three displays of the motherly solicitude of England, it became plain that fewer people, and still fewer, were left in the mood to attend to an examination, whether candid or otherwise, of the mutual claims of Great Britain and the colonies. Finding, therefore, that an irresistible tide was sweeping against him and all his views of things, Galloway wisely withdrew from Philadelphia to his country seat in Bucks County, where, according to his own statement, "he remained several months in the utmost danger from mobs raised by Mr. Adams to hang him at his own door." [1]

In the autumn of 1776, shortly after the surrender of

[1] "The Examination of Joseph Galloway," etc., Balch ed., 51 n. The "Mr. Adams" above referred to, is probably the one who rejoiced in the baptismal name of Samuel.

Fort Lee, he entered the British lines, and, joining the army, accompanied it on its march through New Jersey. With that army he remained in all its subsequent marchings and countermarchings until, in the autumn of 1777, it took possession of Philadelphia. During the British occupation of that city, he held the important offices of superintendent of the police, of the port, and of the prohibited articles; he was much relied on for information and advice by the chief officers of the army; he was himself ingenious and enterprising in the enlistment and employment of Loyalist troops. In June, 1778, upon the British evacuation of Philadelphia, he accompanied the army on its somewhat embarrassed journey back to New York.[1] A few months afterward, in the society of his only daughter, he sailed for England, where he remained until his death in 1803.

V.

His arrival in England was by no means the signal for any diminution of activity on his part in the affairs of his country and of his countrymen. He and Thomas Hutchinson, being then both in England and both alike in American unpopularity, were also both alike in the confidence of the king and ministry, and of the party which favored a vigorous prosecution of the American war. To them Galloway was as valuable for information respecting the middle colonies, as was Hutchinson for information respecting those of New England. Then it was, likewise, that he did his largest and most effective work as a pamphleteer upon topics connected with the Revolution.

The pamphlets which he thus produced may be said to fall into three principal groups. Of these, the first group, dealing with the general issues of the American Revolution as a constitutional question, as a political question, and as a question of general expediency, is made up of the following pamphlets:—"Historical and Political Reflections

[1] "The Examination of Joseph Galloway," etc., Balch ed., 72–73 n.

on the Rise and Progress of the American Rebellion"; "Plain Truth, or, A Letter to the Author of 'Dispassionate Thoughts on the American War'"; "Cool Thoughts on the Consequences to Great Britain of American Independence, on the Expense of Great Britain in the Settlement and Defense of the American Colonies, on the Value and Importance of the American Colonies and the West Indies to the British Empire"; "Political Reflections on the late Colonial Governments, in which their original Constitutional Defects are pointed out, and shewn to have naturally produced the Rebellion which has unfortunately terminated in the Dismemberment of the British Empire." The second group, dealing with the American Revolution as a physical conflict, exposes with terrific force of evidence and with great bitterness of expression, the laxness, the stupendous mismanagement, and even the probable disloyalty, of leading British officers in the conduct of the war; pointing out, likewise, the practicability of complete and speedy success for the British arms in America—if only directed by able leaders determined to succeed. This group is composed of the following pamphlets:—"Letters to a Nobleman on the Conduct of the War in the Middle Colonies"; "A Letter to the Right Honorable Lord Viscount Howe, on his Naval Conduct of the American War"; "Observations upon the Conduct of Sir William Howe at the White Plains, as related in the Gazette of December 30th, 1776"; "The Examination of Joseph Galloway, Esquire . . . before the House of Commons, in a Committee on the American Papers. With Explanatory Notes"; "A Reply to the Observations of Lieutenant-General Sir William Howe on a Pamphlet entitled 'Letters to a Nobleman'—in which his Misrepresentations are detected, and those 'Letters' are supported by a Variety of New Matter and Argument"; "An Account of the Conduct of the War in the Middle Colonies. Extracted from a late Author"; "A Letter from Cicero to the Right Honorable Lord Viscount Howe, occasioned by his late

Speech in the House of Commons"; "Letters from Cicero to Catiline the Second, with Corrections and Explanatory Notes"; "Fabricius, or, Letters to the People of Great Britain, on the Absurdity and Mischiefs of Defensive Operations only in the American War, and on the Causes of the Failure in the Southern Operations." The pamphlets forming the third group seem not to have been begun till even from the stern heart of Galloway had died away the last hope for the further and more competent prosecution of the war. With great ability, and at times with much pathos, he then set forth the motives, the services, and the sacrifices of the American Loyalists, and their claims for considerate treatment at the hands of the British government, in support of which they had risked and lost their all. These pamphlets, but two in number, bear the following titles:—"Observations on the Fifth Article of the Treaty with America, and on the Necessity of appointing a Judicial Enquiry into the Merits and Losses of the American Loyalists"; and "The Claim of the American Loyalists Reviewed and Maintained upon incontrovertible Principles of Law and Justice."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WHIG PAMPHLETEERS IN REPLY TO LOYALIST ATTACKS: NOVEMBER, 1774–APRIL, 1775.

I.—The two chief replies to the "Westchester Farmer" were "A Full Vindication of the Measures of the Congress," and "The Farmer Refuted"—Both by Alexander Hamilton, then an undergraduate in King's College—The extraordinary intellectual ability herein displayed.

II.—The leading points of Hamilton's argument both aggressive and defensive—The alleged lack of legality in the Congress—The essential rights of mankind not derived from parchments—The purpose of despotism not to be frustrated by the force of entreaty—Civil liberty is natural liberty.

III.—Hamilton's anticipation of the military strategy most suitable for the Americans in the war then imminent—His own confession of political faith—A monarchist and a believer in the rights of man—The vast range of thought displayed in his writings during the Revolution.

IV.—The letters of "Massachusettensis" replied to by John Adams in the essays of "Novanglus"—Great reputation of these essays—Their merits and defects.

V.—The Loyalist writer, Myles Cooper—He is assailed by a New York mob in August, 1775—His escape to England and his rewards there—His "American Querist"—His "Friendly Address to all Reasonable Americans."

VI.—Cooper's "Friendly Address" replied to in an unfriendly manner by General Charles Lee—The latter's "Strictures"—His insults to Cooper as a clergyman—Lee's droll discussion of American military competence in the impending conflict with Great Britain.

I.

AMONG the throng of replies which burst forth from the press in opposition to the tremendous pamphlets of the "Westchester Farmer"—first published between the middle of November, 1774, and the latter part of January, 1775,—were two which immediately towered into chief prominence: "A Full Vindication of the Measures of the Congress from the Calumnies of their Enemies," and "The

Farmer Refuted." The extraordinary ability of these two pamphlets—their fullness in constitutional learning, their acumen, their affluence in statement, their cleverness in controversial repartee, their apparent wealth in the fruits of an actual acquaintance with public business—led both the "Westchester Farmer" and the public in general to attribute them to some American writer of mature years and of ripe experience—to some member of the late Congress, for example—particularly to John Jay or to William Livingston.[1]

It is not easy to overstate the astonishment and the incredulity with which the public soon heard the rumor, that these elaborate and shattering literary assaults on the argumentative position of the Loyalists were, in reality, the work of a writer who was then both a stripling in years and a stranger in the country—one Alexander Hamilton, a West Indian by birth, a Franco-Scotsman by parentage, an undergraduate of King's College by occupation, a resident within the Thirteen Colonies but little more than two years, and at the time of the publication of his first pamphlet only seventeen years of age. Even the modern reader of these essays does not need to have an enthusiastic temper in order to be able to agree with the latest editor of Hamilton that, in view of the age of the writer, these essays are "little short of wonderful."[2] "There are displayed in these papers," says, also, George Ticknor Curtis, "a power of reasoning and sarcasm, a knowledge of the principles of government and of the English constitution, and a grasp of the merits of the whole controversy, that would have done honor to any man, at any age. . . . To say that they evince precocity of intellect gives no idea of their main characteristics. They show great maturity—a more remarkable maturity than has ever been exhibited by any other person, at so early an age, in the same department of thought."[3]

[1] John T. Morse, Jr., "The Life of Alexander Hamilton," i. 13–15; Henry Cabot Lodge, "Alexander Hamilton," 8–9.

[2] Henry Cabot Lodge, "The Works of Alexander Hamilton," i. 3.

[3] "Constitutional History of the United States," i. 274.

II.

Of these two pamphlets by Hamilton, the central doctrine is the ultimate one into which American political thinking had then developed, perhaps in half-conscious preparation for the still suppressed and repudiated doctrine of Independence, namely, that the American colonies owed allegiance to the king only, and not to parliament at all[1]; in short, that parliament had no right whatsoever to legislate for America.[2] Moreover, in Hamilton's pamphlets, and mustered about this central doctrine, there stand in battle array those other propositions, both positive and negative, which logically attend it: especially, that every attempt at a constitutional readjustment not based on this doctrine, would be dangerous and futile[3]; that this doctine was entirely consistent with colonial fealty to the empire[4]; that in the assertion and defense of this doctrine, the American people may properly resort to every means that shall be needful—whether provided by existing laws or not, and whether pacific or otherwise.[5]

For example, the "Westchester Farmer" had made much of the supposed lack of legality attaching to the Continental Congress. "Granting your supposition were true," retorts Hamilton, "it would be a matter of no real importance. When the first principles of civil society are violated, and the rights of a whole people are invaded, the common forms of municipal law are not to be regarded. Men may then betake themselves to the law of nature; and, if they but conform their actions to that standard, all cavils against them betray either ignorance or dishonesty. There are some events in society to which human laws cannot extend, but when applied to them lose all their force and efficacy. In short, when human laws contradict or discoun-

[1] "The Farmer Refuted," 25–38. [2] Ibid. 5–15, 49–50.
[3] "A Full Vindication," etc., 23–24, 33. "The Farmer Refuted," 24–25.
[4] "The Farmer Refuted," 15–17, 21.
[5] "A Full Vindication," etc., 4, 8, 10–12, 20–21. "The Farmer Refuted," 50–53, 55, 58, 65–66, 70, 75.

tenance the means which are necessary to preserve the essential rights of any society, they defeat the proper end of all laws, and so become null and void.

"But you have barely asserted, not proved, this illegality. If by the term, you mean contrariety to law, I desire you to produce the law against it, and maintain there is none in being. If you mean that there is no law the intention of which may authorize such a contention, I deny this also. It has always been a principle of the law, that subjects have a right to state their grievances, and petition the king for redress. . . . If so, it cannot be doubted that when a people are aggrieved, and their circumstances will not allow them unitedly to petition in their own persons, they may appoint representatives to do it for them." [1]

So, too, after he has argued at great length and with great power, that the exemption of the American colonies from parliamentary control is provided for in their charters, he shrewdly anticipates the objection that New York, at least, is an American colony which has no charter, and has never had one. To this objection he replies with unruffled composure: "It is true, that New York has no charter. But, if it could support its claim to liberty in no other way, it might with justice plead the common principles of colonization; for it would be unreasonable to seclude one colony from the enjoyment of the most important privileges of the rest. There is no need, however, of this plea. The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for among old parchments, or musty records. They are written as with a sunbeam, in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of the Divinity itself, and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power." [2]

The "Westchester Farmer" had produced a profound effect by his contention that, while the Americans no doubt had serious grievances to be redressed, they had gone about the business in the wrong way; that, instead of such disorderly and irritating measures as they had resorted to, they

[1] "The Farmer Refuted," 52–53, both text and note. [2] Ibid. 38.

should have approached the throne with loyal and respectful petitions; and that loyal and respectful petitions would have been listened to. "It betrays," says Hamilton, "an ignorance of human nature to suppose, that a design formed and ripening for several years, against the liberties of any people, might be frustrated by the mere force of entreaty. Men must cease to be as fond of power as they are, before this can be the case." [1]

Thus, at every turn in a debate which needed to be in part a technical one, this marvelous youth, while quick and expert in the use of technical arguments, never fails by the assertion of some broad, noble, and illuminating principle, to lift the controversy above the pettiness and the aridity natural to all discussion confined to the mere letter of the legal text. Here in America he finds some millions of men and women fretting themselves over nice questions touching the basis and the scope of civil liberty; when straightway he expels all pedantry and all political pharisaism from the discussion by the sweet breath of such quiet and sane words as these: "Civil liberty is only natural liberty, modified and secured by the sanctions of civil society. It is not a thing in its own nature precarious and dependent on human will and caprice; but is conformable to the constitution of man, as well as necessary to the well-being of society." [2]

III.

Even more astonishing, perhaps, is the evidence here given of military as well as of political genius on the part of this juvenile pamphleteer. He shows clear and complete foresight of the exact conditions of the stupendous physical conflict which was approaching; of the precise way in which it was to be met on behalf of the Americans; and of the attitude toward us and toward England, which would inevitably be taken by the nations of Europe—particularly by France, Spain, and Holland.[3] Thus, within the compass of

[1] "The Farmer Refuted," 58. [2] Ibid. 22. [3] Ibid. 70–75.

two or three pages, printed several months before there was an American army in existence, and before Washington had been appointed to take command of it, one may read a distinct delineation of the strategy which in our circumstances would be necessary for success—the very strategy, in fact, which was adopted and put into force by Washington, and through which the American cause won its weary way to victory during the subsequent eight years.[1]

Finally, near the close of his second pamphlet, this writer —still unknown to the public—has a noble passage of self-reference, in reply to certain personal allusions which his antagonist had made to him—to his supposed connection with Revolutionary measures then in progress, to his supposed motives for the part he was taking in the troubles of the time: "Whatever opinion may be entertained of my sentiments and intentions, I attest that Being whose all-seeing eye penetrates the inmost recesses of the heart, that I am not influenced, in the part I take, by any unworthy motive; that if I am in an error, it is my judgment, not my heart, that errs; that I earnestly lament the unnatural quarrel between the parent state and the colonies, and most ardently wish for a speedy reconciliation—a perpetual and mutually beneficial union; that I am a warm advocate for limited monarchy, and an unfeigned well-wisher to the present royal family. But, on the other hand, I am inviolably attached to the essential rights of mankind, and the true interests of society. I consider civil liberty, in a genuine unadulterated sense, as the greatest of terrestrial blessings. I am convinced that the whole human race is entitled to it, and that it can be wrested from no part of them, without the blackest and most aggravated guilt. I verily believe, also, that the best way to secure a permanent and happy union between Great Britain and the colonies is to permit the latter to be as free as they desire. To abridge their liberties, or to exercise any power over them which they are unwilling to submit to, would be a perpetual source

[1] "The Farmer Refuted," 72–73.

of discontent and animosity. A continual jealousy would exist on both sides. This would lead to tyranny on the one hand, and to sedition and rebellion on the other. Impositions not really grievous in themselves, would be thought so; and the murmurs arising from thence would be considered as the effect of a turbulent ungovernable spirit. These jarring principles would at length throw all things into disorder, and be productive of an irreparable breach, and a total disunion. That harmony and mutual confidence may speedily be restored between all parts of the British empire, is the favorite wish of one who feels the warmest sentiments of good will to mankind, who bears no enmity to you, and who is—A sincere Friend of America." [1]

In the exposition of his views touching the several vast fields of thought here brought under consideration,—constitutional law, municipal law, the long line of colonial charters, colonial laws and precedents, international polity as affecting the chief nations of Christendom, justice in the abstract and justice in the concrete, human rights both natural and conventional, the physical and metaphysical conditions underlying the great conflict then impending,—it must be confessed, that this beardless philosopher, this statesman not yet out of school, this military strategist scarcely rid of his roundabout, exhibits a range and precision of knowledge, a ripeness of judgment, a serenity, a justice, a massiveness both of thought and of style, which would perhaps make incredible the theory of his authorship of these pamphlets, were not this theory confirmed by his undoubted exhibition in other ways, at about the same period of his life, of the same astonishing qualities: as in his "Remarks on the Quebec Bill," [2] published in 1775; in his letters under the signature of "Publius," [3] published in 1778; in his essays over the signature of "The Continent-

[1] "The Farmer Refuted," 77–78.

[2] Consisting of two articles, first printed in "The New York Journal," and reprinted in "The Works of Hamilton," Lodge's ed., i. 171–178.

[3] Ibid. 189–200.

alist,"[1] published in 1781; above all, in his personal letter to James Duane[2] written in 1780, and containing a powerful statement of the defects of the articles of confederation, and an almost miraculous forecast of the very incidents and sequences of the process by which, some seven or eight years afterward, the articles of confederation were actually developed into the constitution of the United States.

IV.

Not long after his return home from the first Continental Congress, John Adams seems to have been startled by the argumentative ability and the brilliance of certain essays then appearing in a Boston newspaper over the signature of "Massachusettensis," and well calculated, as he thought, to turn away popular support from that plan of American opposition which the Congress had just promulgated. These essays at once called forth many replies,—none more notable than those which were written by John Adams himself, and which, over the signature of "Novanglus," were published in the "Boston Gazette" between the twenty-third of January and the seventeenth of April, 1775. Although the series was then abruptly closed by the outbreak of hostilities,—an event which had the added effect of diminishing to some extent the pertinence of any further verbal discussion of American rights,—these papers were, even after that event, widely read on this side of the Atlantic, and were repeatedly published on the other side; as in London by Almon in the "Remembrancer" for 1775; in Amsterdam, in a Dutch version, in 1782; and again in London by John Stockdale in 1784. Even so late as the year 1819, they were once more published in this country,—bound up in the same volume with the essays to which they were originally a reply.[3]

[1] Originally published in "The New York Packet," and reprinted complete for the first time in the "Works of Hamilton," Lodge's ed., i. 229–273.

[2] "The Works of Hamilton," Lodge's ed., i. 203–228.

[3] The most accessible edition of "Novanglus" is that included in "The Works of John Adams," iv. 3–177.

Probably no reader of these essays can now avoid the impression that the celebrity still attaching to them is due to the celebrity achieved by their author in other fields, rather than to any unusual literary merit in the essays themselves. Trenchant, pungent, able, and indeed powerful, they are, as statements of the radical and aggressive side of the great controversy. They contain, also, single passages of passionate and energetic eloquence, snatches of caustic humor, clever strokes of retaliatory fencing and of logical word-play, occasional sentences which flash light far down into the crevices of the great problem in dispute. Above all, for a lawyer-like presentation of the later American doctrine of the allegiance of the colonies to the person of the king only, and of their total exemption from the authority of parliament, they are certainly learned, ingenious, and masterful—even if at times inaccurate and unsound. Nevertheless, as examples of literary statement they have many defects: they set out with the blustering proclamation of a large purpose, which they speedily forget and abandon; they abound in whim and extravagance; they are disjointed, rambling, disproportioned; before they have proceeded far, they plunge into a vast morass of technical discussion, into which, perhaps, no living reader will ever follow the writer, from which, in fact, the writer himself never emerges alive.

V.

Every student of the political writings produced among us in the years 1774 and 1775 will come upon many passages of satire and invective which can be understood only through some acquaintance with the person and the career of Myles Cooper, then president of King's College, New York,—an Anglican clergyman of high cultivation, of wit, and of somewhat versatile literary gifts,—closely associated with Seabury, Wilkins, Chandler, Inglis, and other Loyalist writers of the neighborhood, in the effort to enlighten their fellow-colonists respecting their political duty in those troublous times. For his own part in this campaign of

education, President Cooper became extremely odious to the advocates of radical measures,—a fact of which he was made painfully aware by many noisy and violent demonstrations. Finally, on a certain night in August, 1775, while in his rooms in the college, he received notice of the approach of a considerable body of liberty-loving gentlemen who, being bent on "seizing him in his bed, shaving his head, cutting off his ears, slitting his nose, stripping him naked, and setting him adrift," had merely paused by the way to strengthen themselves for their noble task by "a proper dose of Madeira."[1] Making his escape through a back window, Cooper was piloted by one of his pupils to a place of refuge for the night, and on the morrow was taken on board an English ship-of-war, wherein he soon sailed for England. In July, of the following year, he published in "The Gentleman's Magazine"[2] a poem, as "By an Exile from America," giving in sixteen six-lined stanzas a narrative of the attack of the mob upon him and of his own difficult escape from its clutches,—a poem somewhat whimpering in tone, and somewhat too suggestive of a martyr advertising his own martyrdom in blissful expectation of immediate ecclesiastical rewards. And, indeed, in this expectation Cooper was not disappointed. For all his sufferings, he was duly consoled by two good livings in the church. In December, 1776, he preached at Oxford a sermon on "The Causes of the American Rebellion," which was published there in the following year. Dying at Edinburgh in 1785, he was buried, according to his own wish, in a small and a very exclusive cemetery in the neighborhood, and thus, as his epitaph, written by himself, expressed it:

> "unobscured by crowds, withdrew
> To rest among a chosen few."

In consideration of his painful experience at the hand of crowds in New York, it will perhaps be conceded that this

[1] "Appleton's Cyclopædia of Am. Biog.," i. 730. [2] Pages 326–327.

preference of his for a posthumous avoidance of them, even in Edinburgh, was not unnatural.

There can be no doubt that, during portions of the years 1774 and 1775, the uncommon literary gifts of Myles Cooper were freely at the service of the Loyalist cause, and that from his pen came some of the wittiest and most stinging jeux-d'esprit in the Loyalist newspapers of that period. To him, also, by common consent, were attributed two famous political pamphlets, both published in 1774, and both dealing with the controversy precipitated by the first Continental Congress. Of these, the first was "The American Querist, or, Some Questions Proposed relative to the present Disputes between Great Britain and her American Colonies," signed by "A North American." It consists of a hundred questions, all having to do with the matters then at issue. Nothing is asserted; but the questions are so asked as to indicate how every man of sense and of right feeling is expected to answer them,—a mode of discussion whereby the author can vibrate at pleasure between conciliation and satire, and can be very dogmatic without seeming to be so. The second pamphlet, "A Friendly Address to all Reasonable Americans," was still more celebrated,—becoming, indeed, a sort of standard for the Loyalists of the time to rally to, and a favorite target for the shots of their opponents. Taking up the leading arguments urged on behalf of the radical measures then in progress, it replies to them in a fair and considerate tone, but with great acuteness and force, and thus clears the ground for the development of the conservative American position, namely, an assertion of their constitutional rights within the empire, doing this with courage and firmness, yet with decency, moderation, and good humor, and the rejection of every act or aspect of disloyalty. "The great object in view should be a general American constitution on a free and generous plan, worthy of Great Britain to give and of the colonies to receive. This is now become necessary to the mutual interest and honor both of the parent kingdom and of its Ameri-

can offspring. Such an establishment is only to be obtained by decent, candid, and respectful application, and not by compulsion or threatening. To think of succeeding by force of arms, or by starving the nation into compliance, is a proof of shameful ignorance, pride, and stupidity." [1]

VI.

Of the many replies [2] which Cooper's second pamphlet called forth, probably none was more talked about and laughed over, and none was more effective, than a certain sprightly brochure, bearing the date of February 3, 1775,[3] and styling itself, "Strictures on a Pamphlet entitled 'A Friendly Address to all Reasonable Americans.'" [4] From the first, it was attributed to the pen of General Charles Lee, and undoubtedly with truth; for it has all the notes of that brilliant and Mephistophelean personage—eccentricity, fluency, smartness, tartness, a mocking tone, a cosmopolitan air, unusual information, an easy assumption of authority on all subjects—particularly on those appertaining to military history and to military criticism.[5]

That the "Friendly Address," though an anonymous publication, was really the work of an Anglican clergyman of high position, was a fact too useful for purposes of controversy to be neglected by a debater like Charles Lee, and he does not fail to develop it in his very first paragraph; and

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[1] "A Friendly Address," etc., 47.

[2] Among these replies, a very striking one is entitled "The Other Side of the Question," by "A Citizen," and published in New York in 1774. I used the rare copy belonging to George Bancroft, now in the Lenox Library. It is in a tone of irony and banter, and its thrusts are not less keen than those of Lee.

[3] This date stands at the head of the reprint given in "Mem. of the Life of the Late Charles Lee," etc., 136.

[4] My quotations are from an edition published in Boston, 1775.

[5] That Lee was the author of the pamphlet is further certified by its inclusion among his "Miscellaneous Pieces," as published in his "Memoirs," London, 1792, pages 136–155. For an account of the origin of this book and of its value, the reader should look at "The Writings of George Washington," Sparks's edition, ix. 108 n.

thenceforward it recurs, as an almost constant refrain of derision, in the several passes and pauses of his argument: "I know not whether the author is a layman or ecclesiastic, but he bears strongly the characters of the latter. He has the want of candor and truth, the apparent spirit of persecution, the unforgivingness, the deadly hatred to dissenters, and the zeal for arbitrary power, which has distinguished churchmen in all ages, and more particularly the high part of the Church of England. I cannot help considering him as one of this order."[1]

For the convenience of his readers, he then gives a curt and well-phrased outline of the pamphlet he is to deal with: whereupon he thus disposes of it by wholesale: "Now I challenge the world to produce so many wicked sentiments, stupid principles, audaciously false assertions, and monstrous absurdities, crowded together into so small a compass."[2] Notwithstanding this, and at the risk of offering "an insult to American understandings," he proceeds to pick out and to reply to some of these preposterous arguments; as, for instance, that the duty on tea is no tax, because "unless we consent to the tax, we are not to pay the duty—we may refuse purchasing it if we please. The same logic would demonstrate that a duty on beer, candles, or soap, would be no tax: as we are not absolutely obliged to drink beer—we may drink water; we may go to bed before it is dark; and we are not forced to wash our shirts."[3]

Hastening from the political aspect of the dispute, the writer then turns to that which was of far greater interest to him—its military aspect. If the Americans keep up their controversy with England until the appeal shall pass from arguments to arms, what reasonable hope for success can they have? None, none whatsoever, in the opinion of the author of the "Friendly Address." "Regular armies from

[1] "Strictures," etc., 2. [2] Ibid. 3–4.

[3] Ibid. 4. The inalienable right last mentioned by General Lee in the above sentence, is one which he is said to have habitually exemplified in his own toilet.

Great Britain, Hessians, Hanoverians, royal standards erected, skillful generals, legions of Canadians, and unnumbered tribes of savages, swords flaming in front and rear, pestilence, desolation, and famine, are all marshaled in a most dreadful order by this church-militant author."[1] Moreover, to the royal standard, as soon as it shall be erected, will resort "all who have the courage to declare themselves now friends to government"; and these, "in a good cause, will be of themselves formidable to their opposers. Dreadfully formidable they must be indeed! There would resort to it—let me see—. . . there would resort to it, Mr. Justice Sewall, the Honorable Mr. Paxton, Brigadier Ruggles, and about eight or ten more mandamus councilmen, with perhaps twice their number of expectants, and not less than twenty of the unrecanted Hutchinsonian addressers: these the four provinces of New England alone would send forth. New York would furnish six, seven, or probably eight volunteers, from a certain knot who are in possession or expectation of contracts, and the fourth part of a dozen of high-flying Church-of-England Romanized priests. I represent to myself the formidable countenance they will make, when arranged under the royal or ministerial standard; but what will add to the terror of the appearance, will be their Reverend Pontifex himself, whom I conceive marching in the front, an inquisitorial frown upon his brow, his bands and canonicals floating to the air, bearing a cross in his hands, with the tremendous motto—'in hoc signo vinces'—flaming upon it in capital letters of blood, leading them on and exciting them to victory. It is impossible that men who are not under an infatuation by the judgment of Heaven, should flatter themselves that forty-thousand American yeomanry . . . should stand the shock of this dreadful phalanx.

"But I should beg pardon for attempting to be ludicrous upon a subject which demands our utmost indignation. I shall now, therefore, on the presumption that the people of

[1] "Strictures," etc., 4–5.

England should be so lost to sense, virtue, and spirit, as to suffer their profligate mis-rulers to persevere in their present measures, endeavor to state to you what is their force, and what is yours. I shall endeavor to remove the false terrors which this writer would hold out, in order to intimidate you from the defense of your liberties and those of posterity—that he and his similars may wallow in sinecures and benefices heaped up from the fruits of your labor and industry. Great Britain has, I believe, of infantry at home, comprehending Ireland, and exclusive of the guards, fifteen thousand men. They find the greatest difficulty in keeping the regiments up to anything near their establishment: what they are able to procure are of the worst sort. They are composed of the most debauched weavers, apprentices, the scum of the Irish Roman Catholics who desert upon every occasion, and a very few Scotch who are not strong enough to carry packs. This is no exaggeration: those who have lately been at Boston represent the soldiers there, one or two regiments excepted, as very defective in size, and apparently in strength. But we shall be told they are still regulars, and regulars have an irresistible advantage. There is, perhaps, more imposition in the term regular troops, than in any of the jargon which issues from the mouth of a quack doctor. I do not mean to insinuate, that a disorderly mob are equal to a trained, disciplined body of men; but I mean, that all the essentials necessary to form infantry for real service, may be acquired in a few months. I mean that it is very possible for men to be clothed in red, to be expert in all the tricks of the parade, to call themselves regular troops, and yet, by attaching themselves principally or solely to the tinsel and show of war, be totally unfit for real service. This, I am told, is a good deal the case of the present British army. If they can acquit themselves tolerably in the puerile reviews exhibited for the amusement of royal masters and misses in Hyde Park or Wimbledon Common, it is sufficient. In the beginning of the late war, some of the

most esteemed regular regiments were sent over to this country: they were well dressed, they were well powdered, they were perfect masters of their manual exercise, they fired together in platoons,—but fatal experience taught us, that they knew not how to fight. While your militia were frequently crowned with success, these regulars were defeated or baffled for three years successively in every part of the continent. At length, indeed, after repeated losses and disgraces, they became excellent troops, but not until they had absolutely forgotten everything which, we are assured, must render regulars quite irresistible. . . . Upon the whole, it is most certain that men may be smartly dressed, keep their arms bright, be called regulars, be expert in all the antics of a review, and yet be very unfit for real action. It is equally certain, that a militia, by confining themselves to essentials, by a simplification of the necessary manœuvres, may become in a very few months a most formidable infantry. The yeomanry of America have, besides, infinite advantages over the peasantry of other countries: they are accustomed from their infancy to fire-arms, they are expert in the use of them; whereas the lower and middle people of England are, by the tyranny of certain laws, almost as ignorant in the use of a musket, as they are of the ancient catapulta. The Americans are, likewise, to a man, skillful in the management of the instruments necessary for all military works, such as spades, pickaxes, hatchets, etc. Taking, therefore, all circumstances into consideration, there will be no rashness in affirming that this continent may have, formed for action, in three or four months, an hundred thousand infantry." [1]

Finally, is it to be inferred from all this, that the writer of "Strictures" is desirous of precipitating a civil war? Nay, he declares, that would be to do him "great injustice." Nevertheless, "he is convinced that being prepared for a civil war, is the surest means of preventing

[1] "Strictures," etc., 7–9.

it; that to keep the swords of your enemies in their scabbards, you must whet your own." [1]

[1] "Strictures," etc., 11. Other examples of Charles Lee's work as a lively writer on American affairs during the Revolution are, "A Breakfast for Rivington," in "Memoirs" of Lee, 130–135; "To the Gentlemen of the Provincial Congress of Virginia," ibid. 156–164; "A Short History of the Treatment of Major General Conway, Late in the Service of America," ibid. 173–182; and "Some Queries, Political and Military, Humbly offered to the Consideration of the Public," 183–188. The last two pieces are fine specimens of his capacity in malice toward Washington. Perhaps nothing that he ever wrote gives us a better idea of his wit, his eccentricity both in loving and in loathing, and his mockery of things sacred, than his "Last Will and Testament," ibid. 189–193. Of course, the question of his political character is not now before us; but in dismissing him from further consideration in this place, it may be remarked that Charles Lee's treason to the American government was perhaps more profligate, and certainly more damaging, than that of Benedict Arnold; but that Lee had the singular luck to escape public exposure, and therefore the extreme infamy he deserved, until after he had been in his grave for three quarters of a century. He died in 1782; and not until 1858 was George Henry Moore's monograph on "The Treason of Charles Lee, Major General, Second in Command of the Army of the Revolution," first given to the world.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ENTRANCE OF SATIRE INTO THE REVOLUTIONARY CONTROVERSY: PHILIP FRENEAU, 1775.

I.—The transition from political debate to civil war, April 19, 1775, as described by two British officers—The military incidents of the year—The new world of ideas opened to the Americans by this change in the sphere of the controversy.

II.—Contemporary comments on these events as made by Franklin in letters to Priestley and other friends in England.

III.—The change in American literary expression caused by the transfer of the issue from reason to force—The development of satire as a prominent form of literature in the Revolution.

IV.—The materials for satire furnished by the character and results of the earliest collisions between the British regulars and the American militia—British opinion as to the lack of military courage and of military discipline among the Americans—The first experience of the regulars with the militia at Lexington and Concord—The military anti-climax presented by the British retreat—The ironical ballad of "The King's Own Regulars, and their Triumph over the Irregulars."

V.—The Hibernian-Yankee's epistle, "To the Troops in Boston"—The scornful tone of "A New Song to the Tune of 'The British Grenadiers'"—The materials for ridicule furnished by the military situation in 1775, call into the service of the Revolution two great artists in satire, Philip Freneau and John Trumbull.

VI.—Freneau's abandonment of higher poetic work for the service of satire—His fierceness as a satirist—Lines of self-description—His careful training for this work.

VII.—Freneau begins his work as a Revolutionary satirist in 1775—Five satirical poems produced by him in the latter half of that year—His response to General Gage's salutation of the Americans as rebels—"On the Conqueror of America Shut up in Boston."

VIII.—Freneau's satire, "The Midnight Consultations, or, a Trip to Boston"—Declares for American Independence nearly a year before its official proclamation—He predicts American national greatness—He relents in favor of reconciliation with England.

IX.—Freneau renews more fiercely than ever his demand for a total separation from the country that was so injuring us—His "Libera Nos, Domine."

I.

"AFTER a variety of commotions, all of which portended bloodshed, a rebellious war broke out on the nineteenth of this month. On that day, our troops were attacked at Lexington and Concord, the whole country rising upon them; and a straggling encounter ensued from these towns to this place."[1] Such is the euphemistic version of the leading events of an unforgetable day, as given by a British officer in a letter written from Boston on the 25th of April, 1775. "From Concord back to Lexington," wrote another British officer, with less disposition to smooth the rough edges of history, "we sustained a constant fire from every fence, house, hollow way, and height, as we passed along. Here Lord Percy joined us with the first brigade: he had left Boston at nine o'clock that morning. It was a necessary reinforcement, for the whole country were in arms, and all the picked men for forty miles around. We got back to Boston with the loss of upwards of fifty men, and many more wounded. This finished our excursions against rebel magazines. I cannot tell the rebel loss."[2]

Perhaps the first visible result of this "straggling encounter" was that, on the following morning, the British army awoke to find itself closely shut up within the town of Boston, and its curiosity to become better acquainted with the interior of New England thereafter effectually restrained by a motley rabble of armed peasants encamped in its neighborhood. Moreover, it should be here noted that, for the remainder of this year 1775, among the direct consequences of what happened on the nineteenth of April, were the American capture of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, on the 10th of May; the battle of Bunker Hill, on the 17th of June; the appointment of Washington as commander-in-chief, on the 19th of June; the capture of Montreal by an

[1] "The Detail and Conduct of the American War, under Generals Gage, Howe, and Burgoyne, and Vice Admiral Lord Howe," 5.

[2] Ibid. 9–10.

American force under Montgomery, on the 12th of November; and, finally, the disastrous failure of the American attack on Quebec, on the 31st of December.

So ended the year in which the physical conflict of the Revolution began. And, thus, all tokens point to that day of evil, April the nineteenth, 1775, as the one by which the entire period of the Revolution is cut into two nearly equal but sharply contrasted sections. After ten years of words, the disputants come at last to blows. Prior to this day, the Revolutionary controversy was a political debate: after that, it was a civil war. Of the immense transformation then and there made in the very character and atmosphere of the struggle—in its ideas, its purposes, its spirit, its tone—no modern person can in any other way procure for himself so just and so vivid a picture as by studying the writings produced among us immediately before and immediately after that fatal day. Of the former, we have just inspected the most characteristic examples. It remains for us now to look at the chief representatives of the latter.

II.

There was then at Philadelphia, watching all these dreadful developments, a very wise old man, who loathed war, not merely as a brutal way of solving practical difficulties among men, but as a singularly inapt, clumsy, and inconclusive way; a man who, having been resident in England during the previous ten years, had there put all his genius, all the energy of his heart and will, all his tact and shrewdness, all his powers of fascination, into the effort to keep the peace between these two kindred peoples, to save from disruption their glorious and already planetary empire, and especially to avert the very appeal to force which had at last been made. By a glance at the comments upon the new situation, which Benjamin Franklin then made from day to day, chiefly in the form of letters to a few distinguished friends in England, as Joseph Priestley and William Strahan,

we may now most surely introduce ourselves to the very thoughts and passions of the noblest Americans in that sorrowful time, and may perceive both the prodigious transformation in the nature of the controversy wrought through this change in its method, and also by how impassable a gulf the America subsequent to April nineteenth, 1775, is separated from the America prior to that fatal day.

Thus, on the sixteenth of May, Franklin writes to Priestley: "You will have heard, before this reaches you, of a march stolen by the regulars into the country by night, and of their expedition back again. They retreated twenty miles in six hours. The governor had called the assembly to propose Lord North's pacific plan, but, before the time of their meeting, began cutting their throats. You know it was said he carried the sword in one hand and the olive branch in the other; and it seems he chose to give them a taste of the sword first. . . . All America is exasperated by his conduct, and more firmly united than ever. The breach between the two countries is grown wider and in danger of becoming irreparable."[1] On the fifth of July, he writes to Strahan: "You have begun to burn our towns, and murder our people. Look upon your hands—they are stained with the blood of your relations! You and I were long friends; you are now my enemy, and I am, Yours, B. Franklin."[2] On the seventh of July, to Priestley he writes: "The Congress met at a time when all minds were so exasperated by the perfidy of General Gage, and his attack on the country people, that propositions for attempting an accommodation were not much relished; and it has been with difficulty that we have carried another humble petition to the crown, to give Britain one more chance, one opportunity more, of recovering the friendship of the colonies; which, however, I think she has not sense enough to embrace, and so I conclude she has lost them forever. She has begun to burn our seaport towns. . . . She may doubtless destroy them; but, if she wishes to recover our

[1] "Works of Franklin," Bigelow ed., v. 532–533. [2] Ibid. 534.

commerce, are these the probable means? . . . If she wishes to have us subjects, and that we should submit to her as our compound sovereign, she is now giving us such miserable specimens of her government, that we shall detest and avoid it, as a complication of robbery, murder, famine, fire, and pestilence." [1]

On the third of October, Franklin again writes to Priestley: "Tell our dear good friend, Dr. Price, who sometimes has his doubts and despondencies about our firmness, that America is determined and unanimous,—a very few Tories and placemen excepted, who will probably soon export themselves. Britain, at the expense of three millions, has killed one hundred and fifty Yankees this campaign—which is twenty thousand pounds a head; and at Bunker's Hill she gained a mile of ground, half of which she lost again by our taking post on Ploughed Hill. During the same time sixty thousand children have been born in America. From these data, his mathematical head will easily calculate the time and expense necessary to kill us all, and conquer our whole territory." [2]

On the same date, to another friend in England, he writes: "I wish as ardently as you can do for peace, and should rejoice exceedingly in coöperating with you to that end. But every ship from Britain brings some intelligence of new measures that tend more and more to exasperate; and it seems to me that until you have found by dear experience the reducing us by force impracticable, you will think of nothing fair and reasonable. . . . If you would recall your forces and stay at home, we should meditate nothing to injure you. A little time so given for cooling on both sides, would have excellent effects. But you will goad and provoke us. You despise us too much; and you are insensible of the Italian adage, that 'there is no little enemy.' I am persuaded that the body of the British people are our friends; but they are changeable, and by your lying gazettes may soon be made our enemies. Our respect

[1] "Works of Franklin," Bigelow ed., v. 534–535. [2] Ibid. 539–540.

for them will proportionably diminish, and I see clearly we are on the highroad to mutual enmity, hatred, and detestation. A separation of course will be inevitable. It is a million of pities, so fair a plan as we have hitherto been engaged in for increasing strength and empire with public felicity, should be destroyed by the mangling hands of a few blundering ministers. . . . We hear that more ships and troops are coming out. We know that you may do us a great deal of mischief; . . . but if you flatter yourselves with beating us into submission, you know neither the people nor the country." [1]

III.

Of course, a swift change in the literary expression of the controversy resulted from this change in its sphere and its weapons,—this transition from reason to force, this abandonment of arguments for arms.

The deep, true love of Americans for the mother country, their pride in the British empire, their sincerity in the belief that all their political demands were compatible with their own loyalty and with the honor of England, their desire that the solution of every vexing problem should be reached in peace,—all these were realities, realities as genuine as they were pathetic. In the transactions of the nineteenth of April, 1775, at the hands of official representatives of the mother country, all these sacred realities were foully dealt with,—they were stamped upon, were spit upon, they were stabbed and shot at and covered with blood and cast into the mire. Accordingly, reaching this fatal point in his journey across the period of the Revolution, the student of its literature becomes then and there conscious of crossing a great spiritual chasm—of moving from one world of ideas and sentiments to a world of ideas and sentiments quite other and very different. As the news of the transactions of that day travels from man to man, upon white lips, up and down the country, all at once with each group of listen-

[1] "Works of Franklin," Bigelow ed., v. 540–541.

ers there seems to come a spiritual revolution: in place of what was before in their hearts, are now mute astonishment as of persons stunned, a shock of horror and pain, the anguish born of affection spurned with insult and of patriotic devotion crushed under outrage; next, a consciousness of the futility of all further appeals to reason, to tradition, to law, to right; then, the conviction that henceforward all these wonderful questions about stamps and paints and glass and tea, about the right of representation and the right of petition, about the British parliament and the British crown, are simply things of a very dead past, mere antiquarian trinkets and gew-gaws, themes for human discourse as obsolete as the gossip of that polite society that went down under the Deluge. Moreover, instead of all these politico-metaphysical conundrums, Americans find staring them in the face this altogether serious and not at all metaphysical question,—whether their homes are to be forcibly entered by red-coated ruffians, their property to be seized, their wives and daughters to be outraged, and themselves to be shot down on their own doorsills for making objection. Certainly, the thing next to be done by them, is to fight; but for what? For the privilege of resuming, on better terms, their old place in the British empire? Away with the British empire on any terms! For the red flag of their king? What care they any more for the red flag of a king who has made that flag redder yet in the blood of subjects who loved him and who never meant to be disloyal to him?

As to American literature, from this day forward it can only be in the moods and forms of the new situation: for the enemy, words of loathing, of scorn, of defiance, gibes, scoffings, mockings, taunts; for friends, words of faith, words of deathless resolution, words of indomitable cheer, with songs that may move men to fight in the cause of the new fatherland and gaily to die for it. As it proved, the most prominent and the most characteristic form of literature developed under the conditions of American society after the nineteenth of April, 1775, was Satire.

IV.

A most enticing opportunity for satire was furnished, during the year 1775, by the character and results of these first collisions between the British troops and the poor, ill-equipped, and ill-disciplined provincials, who, as had been frankly promised, were to be scared or beaten into submission at a single display of imperial force.

If we would now perceive the point and edge of this earliest development of regular satire during the Revolutionary controversy, we must remember that, as was not at all strange, the British entered upon the war with no expectation that it was to be a long and a desperate one, and especially with extreme contempt for the military resources and for the military qualities of their insubordinate colonists, basing their judgment, apparently, upon two supposed facts : first, that the Americans were a people lacking in warlike courage, and, secondly, that being quite without military discipline, and quite without the willingness to submit themselves to it, their volunteer troops could never stand up against British regulars. Moreover, as it happened, in the months immediately before the opening of hostilities, this strong Britannic contempt was again and again flung into speech by indiscreet representatives of it, and in a way admirably calculated to give it the widest celebrity and the sharpest sting. Thus, in the house of lords, the Earl of Sandwich, a member of the ministry, had declared that as soldiers the Americans were " raw, undisciplined, and cowardly " ; that they could never " look British regulars in the face " ; that " the very sound of a cannon would send them off as fast as their feet could carry them." [1] So, also, Major Pitcairn, who was shot dead while gallantly entering the American redoubt at Bunker Hill, had boasted, on embarking at Portsmouth for America, that " if he drew his sword but half out of the scabbard, the

[1] Geo. Bancroft, " Hist. U. S.," last rev., iv. 137–138 ; F. Moore, " Diary of the Am. Rev.," i. 344.

whole banditti of Massachusetts Bay would flee from him."[1] Sir Jeffrey Amherst, likewise, was reported to have said that "with five thousand English regulars he would engage to march from one end to the other of the continent of North America."[2]

When, accordingly, early one morning in the spring of 1775, on Lexington common, a considerable force of these invincible British regulars first saw in front of them a little group of undisciplined and cowardly yeomen, they very promptly fired upon them; and having thus killed eight, and wounded nine, they burst into a laugh, and with a few good round British oaths they swore that, of course, the Yankees could never bear the smell of gunpowder. Nevertheless, on that same day, and even before many hours had passed by, these same British regulars, having ceased to laugh, and having found rather urgent occasion to return speedily to Boston, were so chased, and fired upon, and otherwise harassed, by the cowardly provincials, that they themselves were thought to have manifested some antipathy to gunpowder, and even to have illustrated their martial prowess chiefly by the quality of speed in making a retreat. Certainly, the despicable Yankees must have been superhuman beings to have foreborne from the uproar of loud derision in the presence of this grotesque example of the military anti-climax, in which, indeed, were materials for satire too choice to be disregarded by our young brood of American versifiers then and there looking on.

A rough specimen of such satirical work as they then did, may be seen in an anonymous ballad soon afterward scattered broadside over the land, and entitled "The King's Own Regulars, and their Triumph over the Irregulars; a New Song, to the Tune of 'An Old Courtier of the Queen's, and the Queen's Old Courtier.'" Thus adopting for his

[1] F. Moore, "Diary of the Am. Rev.," i. 344.

[2] This was stated in a London paper for April 15, 1775, and reprinted in the "Pennsylvania Packet" for June 12th of the same year. F. Moore, "Diary of the Am. Rev.," i. 96.

ballad the long, rambling, ludicrous verse then familiar to all in the famous English ballad bearing the first part of the same title, the poet represents one of these British regulars in America as giving a blunt, soldierly account of the achievements of the force to which he belonged, and especially of the little incident of their retreat from Concord, palliating the disgrace of it by ironical excuses which really cut the other way and made the disgrace more obvious:

"Since you all will have singing, and won't be said nay,
I cannot refuse, when you so beg and pray;
So I 'll sing you a song, as a body may say,—
'T is of the King's Regulars, who ne'er ran away.
O! the Old Soldiers of the King, and the King's Own Regulars.

. . . . . .

"No troops perform better than we at reviews,—
We march, and we wheel, and whatever you choose;
George would see how we fight, and we never refuse;
There we all fight with courage—you may see 't in the news.

. . . . . .

"Grown proud at reviews, great George had no rest;
Each grandsire, he had heard, a rebellion suppressed;
He wished a rebellion—looked round, and saw none—
So resolved a rebellion to make—of his own.

"The Yankees he bravely pitched on, because he thought they would n't fight,
And so he sent us over to take away their right;
But lest they should spoil our review clothes, he cried braver and louder,
For God's sake, brother kings, don't sell the cowards any powder.

"Our General with his council of war did advise,
How at Lexington we might the Yankees surprise;
We marched—and re-marched—all surprised at being beat,
And so our wise General's plan of surprise was complete.

"For fifteen miles, they follow'd and pelted us—we scarce had time to draw a trigger;
But did you ever know a retreat performed with more vigor?
For we did it in two hours, which saved us from perdition;
'T was not in going out, but in returning, consisted our expedition.

. . . . . .

"Of their firing from behind fences, he makes a great pother:
Every fence has two sides, they made use of one, and we only forgot to use the other;
That we turned our backs and ran away so fast,—don't let that disgrace us,—
'T was only to make good what Sandwich said, that the Yankees could not face us!

"As they could not get before us, how could they look us in the face?
We took good care they should n't—by scampering away apace;
That they had not much to brag of, is a very plain case—
For if they beat us in the fight, we beat them in the race!
O! the Old Soldiers of the King, and the King's Own Regulars."[1]

V.

Another satirical versifier, dwelling upon the comic aspects of the retreat of the British regulars from Concord, conceived the idea of adding to the general mirth and of still further making light of these light-footed gentlemen, by means of a pretended epistle, as from the pen of a shrewd and grinning Irishman on the Yankee side of the line, and addressed

"To the Troops in Boston.

"By me faith, but I think ye 're all makers of bulls,
Wid your brains in your breeches, your guts in your skulls!

[1] This ballad, which was circulated during the Revolution in many forms, is given in full by F. Moore, "Diary of the Am. Rev.," i. 214–216, as from the "Pennsylvania Evening Post," for March 30, 1776.

Get home wid your muskets, and put up your swords,
And look in your books for the maneing of words :
Ye see now, me honeys, how much ye 're mistaken,—
For Concord by discord can never be baten !

" How brave ye wint out wid your muskets all bright,
And thought to befrighten the folks wid the sight ;
But whin ye got there, how they powder'd your pums,
And all the way home how they pepper'd your —— ;
And is it not, honeys, a comical crack,
To be proud in the face, and be shot in the back !

" How came ye to think, now, they did not know how
To be afther their firelocks as smartly as you ?
Why, ye see now, me honeys, 't is nothing at all—
But to pull at the trigger—and pop goes the ball.

" And what have ye got now, wid all your designin',
But a town widout victuals to sit down and dine in ;
And to look on the ground like a parcel of noodles,
And sing how the Yankees have conquer'd the Doodles ?
I 'm sure if ye 're wise, ye 'll make peace for a dinner,—
For fightin' and fastin' will soon make ye thinner." [1]

From mere irony, from playful ridicule to stern derision, to proud and scoffing defiance, was for the American satirists in 1775 an easy transition, as the spring of that year advanced into the summer and the autumn, and as the incompetence of British generalship in America continued to develop its almost incredible score of blunders and disasters:

" Your dark, unfathomed councils, our weakest heads defeat,
Our children rout your armies, our boats destroy your fleet ;

[1] This Hibernian-Yankee ballad seems to have made a great hit, as may be easily imagined ; and it was printed off in various versions both in the newspapers and on separate sheets. F. Moore, who gives a version of it printed in May, 1775, says that the trifle first appeared in the " Pennsylvania Magazine." —" Songs and Ballads of the Am. Rev.," 92–93.

And to complete the dire disgrace, coop'd up within a town,
You live the scorn of all our host, the slaves of Washington!

"Great heaven!—is this the nation, whose thundering arms were hurled
Through Europe, Afric, India?—whose navy ruled the world?
The lustre of whose former deeds, whose ages of renown,
Lost in a moment, are transferred to us and Washington?"[1]

These examples of spontaneous and artless satire, from American verse-writers whose names are lost perhaps beyond recovery, may suffice to show us how the new ideas, the new hatreds, the new hopes, begotten of the first clash of arms, of the first blood and anguish of defeat or victory, found their prompt and almost unstudied utterance among us in a vast miscellany of humorous and sarcastic rhymes. It is now our pleasant duty to extend and deepen our studies in this field, and to note how the copious materials for satire furnished by this earliest chapter of military experience in the Revolution, called into the American service two great, and indeed still unrivaled, artists in satire, Philip Freneau and John Trumbull.

VI.

In a former part[2] of this work, the attempt has already been made to trace the poetic career of Freneau down to a time just prior to the events now reached by us. Though he had already given ample proof of his capacity for higher and sweeter work than that of satire, he then turned away from such work with full deliberation, as from something for

[1] These lines are from "A New Song to the Tune of 'The British Grenadiers,'" consisting of twelve vigorous stanzas. It seems to have escaped the researches of other explorers in this field, and was found by me among the Revolutionary broadsides belonging to the Pennsylvania Historical Society. Of course, the typographical execution of such broadsides was very careless; and in the last two lines of the portion above quoted, I have corrected two obvious errors of the press.

[2] See chapter viii.

which his own age and country did not care, and devoted his whole strength as a poet to the service of satire — of satire upon the political and military enemies of the Revolution. Whether it was by nature, whether it was by culture, Freneau succeeded in confronting the enemy, both foreign and domestic, with a visage as stern, with a scorn as bitter, with a loathing as ruthless as that required by the unamiable muse whom he had chosen for his mistress. It will scarcely be doubted by any reader of Freneau's verse, that, in the development of that awful tempest of partisan rancor and race hatred which we call the American Revolution, this man was faithful to his vocation of stimulating its violence to the utmost; or that, at its close, the thought could ever have rested as a burden upon his conscience, that any lull or pause in the ferocity of the great conflict had been due to the least self-restraint on his part in the expression of political and personal acrimony towards the armed or the unarmed foes of the Revolution. Indeed, in one of his earliest satires he acknowledges the pitiless nature of his purpose, the implacable fierceness of his method:

> "Rage gives me wings, and, fearless, prompts me on
> To conquer brutes the world should blush to own;
> No peace, no quarter, to such imps I lend—
> Death and perdition on each line I send." [1]

In one of his latest satires, also, he causes the party-shifting printer, Hugh Gaine, in confessing the publication of some of Freneau's verses, to give a powerful and a really just description of the poet's relentless asperity in satire:

> "To gain a mere trifle, a shilling or so,
> I printed some treason for Philip Freneau,—
> Some damnable poems reflecting on Gage,
> The king, and his council, and writ with such rage,
> So full of invective and loaded with spleen,
> So pointedly sharp, and so hellishly keen,

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 86.

That, at least in the judgment of half our wise men,
Alecto herself made the nib to his pen." [1]

Freneau's training for the business of a satirist was thorough. From his youth up, he had been a particular student of Latin literature—that literature, the only original and supremely powerful element in which is satire. As could be said of but few of his American contemporaries, he had found his way, also, to the French poets and satirists. If the minor English poets of his own early manhood, feeble and even bastard as was their art,—Shenstone, Macpherson, Mason, Akenside, Warton—seem to have had for him as a contemporary a charm which they can never have, it may be hoped, for any later member of the human family, it still remains to be told that his true masters in English verse were Churchill, Pope, and Dryden, and in their special work as satirists.

VII.

Moreover, Freneau began his career as a satirist at a fortunate moment,—at a moment when just such a satirist was in demand, and when the materials for just such satire—sincere, infuriate, savage, remorseless satire—were furnished to his hand in profuse abundance by the political and the military incidents that were transacting all around him. The first unmistakable flashes of his satiric power which can now be recognized on themes connected with the Revolution, belong to that pathetic and heroic year, 1775, when, at last, after more than a decade of intellectual controversy, the crash of the physical controversy began to be heard, reverberating all along the continent from Lexington common and from the grim hill by the side of Charlestown. As many as four or five poems, all elastic with vigor, and all steeped in satiric passion and acerbity, leaped from his pen that year:—"On the Conqueror of America Shut up in

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 283–284.

Boston,"[1] and "General Gage's Soliloquy,"[2] both published in August; "The Midnight Consultations, or, A Trip to Boston,"[3] and "Libera Nos, Domine,"[4] both published in September; and, finally, "MacSwiggen,"[5] published probably in November or December.

Thus, the first four of these poems appeared within the two months of August and September; and the American situation at that very time both illustrates, and is illustrated by, them. In the last of the four the vision sweeps over the entire scene, up and down the continent, and takes account of all our chief assailants there. In the first three, the scene is confined to the neighborhood of Boston, the conspicuous person in it being General Thomas Gage, who, after two futile and disastrous attempts at penetrating the interior of the country, is with his half-fed army shut up in Boston and there beleaguered by a despicable mob composed of those American peasants whom he had just before, with great bluster and pomp of words, denounced as rebels, and doomed to the halter. These are the salient facts upon which the eye of the American satirist fastens; and first catching up the damning name which the British general had sought to fix upon two millions of people, their poet flings back the sombre compliment with ample reparation:

"'Rebels you are'—the British champion cries.
Truth, stand thou forth, and tell Tom Gage he lies!
'Rebels!'—and see, this mock imperial Lord
Already threats those 'rebels' with the cord!

"The hour draws nigh, the glass is almost run,
When truth must shine, and scoundrels be undone,
When this base miscreant shall forbear to sneer—
And curse his taunts and bitter insults here."[6]

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[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 74–75.
[2] Ibid. 59–63.
[3] Ibid. 63–72.
[4] Ibid. 58–59.
[5] Ibid. 83–88.
[6] Ibid. 74–75.

Of course, never has any man of Anglo-Saxon blood delighted, at first, in the name of rebel: the taste for it among us is an acquisition attainable only through culture. In the bestowment of that sort of culture, Freneau was quite ready to be of use to his countrymen:

"If to control the cunning of a knave,
Freedom adore, and scorn the name of slave,
If to protest against a tyrant's laws,
And arm for vengeance in a righteous cause,
Be deemed rebellion—'t is a harmless thing,
This bug-bear name, like death, has lost its sting."[1]

At the same time he warns them not to forget that the mighty Power which, through its representative, now applies to Americans the word rebels, has an awful record for unshrinking thoroughness in dealing with such offenders:

"If Britain conquers, help us, Heaven, to fly!
Lend me your wings, ye ravens of the sky.
If Britain conquers,—we exist no more:
These lands shall redden with their children's gore,
Who turned to slaves, their fruitless toils shall moan—
Toils in these fields that once they called their own!

"To arms! to arms!—and let the trusty sword
Decide who best deserves the hangman's cord;
Nor think the hills of Canada too bleak,
When desperate freedom is the prize you seek.

. . . . . .

"Haste! to your tents in fetters bring
These slaves that serve their tyrant of a king.
So just, so virtuous, is your cause, I say
Hell must prevail—if Britain wins the day!"[2]

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[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 75.
[2] Ibid.

VIII.

The longest and perhaps also the most powerful of these satires for the year 1775, is the one entitled "The Midnight Consultations, or, A Trip to Boston." Though not published until September, its time is a midnight in June,—the midnight following the Bunker Hill fight; and the British chiefs, again baffled by the rebels as they had been two months before, and now disheartened by the amazing power of resistance, and even of aggression, displayed by these ill-armed rustics, are represented as having come together for consultation at the house of General Gage. The poet, guided by what he calls the "glimmering beam" of the polestar, has in a vision made his journey thither at that very time, in order, as he says,—

> "To view the peevish, half-starved spectres there,"

and to see for himself just how these, our lately confident assailants,

> "sicken in these hostile climes,
> Themes for the stage, and subjects for our rhymes."[1]

As he comes upon the scene, and remembers the sufferings which these brutal invaders have already brought, and the still greater sufferings which they are destined to bring—unless driven back—his anger breaks out in the form of an impassioned apostrophe to his imperiled country, imploring her, at last, to call forth and to use the enormous resources for destruction which nature has deposited in her forests and her mines:

> "Know your own strength—in rocky deserts bred,
> Shall the fierce tiger by the dog be led,
> And bear all insults from that snarling race
> Whose courage lies in impudence of face?"[2]

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 64.

[2] Ibid. 64-65.

After this gust of wrath, the poet comes into the beleaguered city, and soon finds his way

> " to the dome of state
> Where Gage resides—our western potentate,
> Chief of ten-thousand, all a race of Huns,
> Sent to be slaughtered by our rifle-guns ;
> Sent by our angry Jove—sent sword in hand
> To murder, burn, and ravage through the land." [1]

At Gage's house, he looks in upon the chiefs assembled there, — seeing, of course, Gage himself ; and Admiral Graves, commander of the British war-ships in the harbor; and General Burgoyne already known in America for his personal vanity and his windy rhetoric; and Lord Percy, who was accused of having shown rather too much agility in getting away from the scene of danger; and, finally, General Howe:

> " Twelve was the hour—congenial darkness reigned,
> And no bright star a mimic daylight feigned.
> First, Gage we saw—a crimson chair of state
> Received the honor of his Honor's weight.
> This man of straw the regal purple bound,
> But dullness, deepest dullness, hovered round.
> Next Graves, who wields the trident of the brine,
> The tall arch-captain of the embattled line,
> All gloomy sate—mumbling of flame and fire,
> Balls, cannons, ships, and all their damned attire ;
> Well pleased to live in never-ending hum,
> But empty as the interior of his drum.
> Hard by, Burgoyne assumes an ample space,
> And seemed to meditate with studious face,
> As if again he wished our world to see
> Long, dull, dry, letters writ to General Lee—
> Huge scrawls of words through endless circuits drawn,
> Unmeaning as the errand he 's upon.

[1] " The Poems of Philip Freneau," 65.

Is he to conquer—he subdue our land—
This buckram hero, with his lady's hand?
By Cæsars to be vanquished is a curse,
But by a scribbling fop—by heaven, is worse!"

"Lord Percy seemed to snore—but may the muse
This ill-timed snoring to the peer excuse:
Tired was the long boy of his toilsome day—
Full fifteen miles he fled, a tedious way.

. . . . . .

Howe, vext to see his starving army's doom,
Once more besought the skies for 'elbow room.'

. . . . . .

He cursed the brainless minister that planned
His bootless errand to this hostile land;
But awed by Gage, his bursting wrath recoiled,
And in his inmost bosom doubly boiled."[1]

These, then, are the British chiefs who, occupying the high places in the council room, are surrounded by a crowd of inferior officers—

"a pensioned clan,
A sample of the multitudes that wait,
Pale sons of famine at Perdition's gate;

. . . . . .

Knights, captains, squires—a wonder-working band!
Held at small wages till they gain the land."[2]

The deliberations are opened by General Gage, who, humiliated and angry over the result of the war thus far, and especially over the battle of that day, gives vent to his spleen, and meanly trying to fasten the blame upon his subordinates, has only courage enough to fling a taunt at young Percy:

"Now Gage, rebounding from his cushioned seat,
Swore thrice, and cried 'T is nonsense to be beat!

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 65–67. [2] Ibid. 66–67.

Thus to be drubbed ! Pray, warriors, let me know
Which be in fault, myself, the fates, or you !
Henceforth let Britain deem her men mere toys !
Gods ! to be frighted thus by country boys.
Why, if our army had a mind to sup,
They might have eat that schoolboy army up !
Three thousand to twelve hundred thus to yield,
And twice five hundred stretched upon the field !—
O shame to Britain, and the British name ;
Shame damps my heart, and I must die with shame,
Thus to be worsted, thus disgraced and beat !—
You have the knack, Lord Percy, to retreat ;
The death you 'scaped my warmest blood congeals,
Heaven grant me, too, so swift a pair of heels ! '

. . . . . .

Thus spoke the great man in disdainful tone
To the gay peer,—not meant for him alone." [1]

By this taunt roused from his slumber, Lord Percy mildly defends himself,—arguing that, since a well-aimed ball may hit a peer as well as a peasant, he is the wise peer who keeps aloof from danger as much as he may; and then he turns upon General Howe with the insinuation that, whatever may have been his own blame that day, the disaster on Bunker Hill was due chiefly to that officer. Of course, to this charge General Howe makes reply; and then, at the close of his speech, turning from their miserable past to their still more miserable future, he appeals to his comrades to unite in some plan to save themselves at least from starvation. Under this appeal, Gage solemnly announces to the council the great decision to which his mind has been brought in consequence of their deliberations:

" Gage smote upon his breast,
And cried, ' What fate determines must be best.

. . . . . .

[1] " The Poems of Philip Freneau," 67.

Three weeks—ye gods ! nay, three long years it seems,
Since roast beef I have touched, except in dreams.
In sleep, choice dishes to my view repair,—
Waking, I gape and champ the empty air.
Say, is it just that I, who rule these bands,
Should live on husks, like rakes in foreign lands ?—
Come, let us plan some project ere we sleep,
And drink destruction to the rebel sheep.
On neighboring isles uncounted cattle stray,
Fat beeves, and swine—an ill defended prey ;
These are fit victims for my noonday dish,
These, if my soldiers act as I would wish,
In one short week would glad your maws and mine—
On mutton we will sup, on roast beef dine ! '
Shouts of applause reëchoed through the hall,
And what pleased one as surely pleased them all ;
Wallace was named to execute the plan,
And thus sheep-stealing pleased them to a man." [1]

Certainly, the satire in all this is genuine. The comedy of such a situation,—the invincible troops of Great Britain discomfited by provincial militia, and, pent up in a seaboard town, saving themselves from actual starvation by a concerted resort to sheep-stealing on the undefended islands in Boston harbor,—not only has in it something extremely grotesque, but has, likewise, a logical bearing on American hopes and fears touching the issue of the contest that still lies before them;—and all this the poet fails not to make use of:

" What are these upstarts from a foreign isle,
That we should fear their hate, or court their smile ?
. . . . . .
Laughs not the soul when an imprisoned crew
Affect to pardon those they can't subdue ;
Though thrice repulsed, and hemmed up to their stations,
Yet issue pardons, oaths, and proclamations ? " [2]

[1] " The Poems of Philip Freneau," 70.

[2] Ibid. 70–71.

And then it was—nearly a year before the project for Independence was to find official sanction—that this poet bitterly and boldly proclaimed Independence as the only sensible and adequate remedy for American wrongs:

"Too long our patient country wears their chains,
Too long our wealth all-grasping Britain drains!
Why still a handmaid to that distant land?
Why still subservient to their proud command?
Britain the bold, the generous, and the brave,
Still treats our country like the meanest slave;
Her haughty lords already share the prey,
Live on our labors, and with scorn repay!
Rise, sleeper, rise, while yet the power remains,
And bind their nobles and their chiefs in chains.
Fallen on disastrous times, they scorn our plea;—
'T is our own efforts that must make us free.
Born to contend, our lives we place at stake,
And grow immortal by the stand we make." [1]

Nay, as upon their own unconquerable spirits, so upon the face of nature itself, is written the promise of a great destiny for the American people; and with the unhesitant tone and gesture of a prophet, the poet proceeds to unroll the canvas on which is painted the future of their nation, as one vast, united, free, and peaceful empire of humanity, filling all the vast domain from the Atlantic to the Mississippi:

"The time shall come when strangers rule no more,
Nor cruel mandates vex from Britain's shore;
When commerce shall extend her shortened wing,
And her rich freights from every climate bring;
When mighty towns shall flourish free and great,—
Vast their dominion, opulent their state;
When one vast cultivated region teems
From ocean's side to Mississippi's streams,

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 71.

While each enjoys his vine tree's peaceful shade,
And even the meanest has no foe to dread." [1]

It is a touching fact,—it tells, indeed, of the deep reluctance with which the American colonists accepted this robust remedy of national Independence, and even of their early fluctuations in mood after they had accepted it,—that at the close of this very satire, in which Freneau so early and so passionately demanded the rupture of every tie that bound us to the mother land, even he relented—he, the impersonation of Revolutionary radicalism and fierceness—and yielding, for one brief moment, to the strong plea of filial affection, himself sent forth a touching prayer for peace—for reconciliation—for a lasting union between the colonies and the mother country, such as they had enjoyed under the one English king who was ever fondly loved in America:

"O heaven-born Peace, renew thy wonted charms;
Far be this rancor, and this din of arms;
To warring lands return, an honored guest,
And bless our crimson shore among the rest.
Long may Britannia rule our hearts again—
Rule as she ruled in George the Second's reign;
May ages hence her growing grandeur see,
And she be glorious—but ourselves be free!" [2]

IX.

It must be told, however, that this sob of wounded affection—this burst of natural grief over sacred ties that were breaking—this naïve cry for an arrest of Revolutionary fury and hurly-burly, and for a return to the subordination and the quietude of the old colonial times—all this was, on Freneau's part, but a momentary relapse into political soft-heartedness. As if to proclaim his remorse for such weakness, and his full recovery from it, almost immediately afterward he sent forth his "Libera Nos, Domine,"—a

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 71. [2] Ibid. 72.

slashing, contemptuous, and fierce litany for total and final deliverance from every shred of British rule and contact:

"From a junto that labor for absolute power,
Whose schemes disappointed have made them look sour;
From the lords of the council, who fight against freedom,
Who still follow on where the devil shall lead 'em;

"From the group at St. James's, that slight our petitions,
And fools that are waiting for further submissions;
From a nation whose manners are rough and abrupt,
From scoundrels and rascals whom gold can corrupt;

"From pirates sent out by command of the king
To murder and plunder, but never to swing,—
From Wallace, and Graves, and Vipers and Roses,
Whom, if heaven pleases, we 'll give bloody noses;

"From the valiant Dunmore, with his crew of banditti,
Who plunder Virginians at Williamsburgh city;
From hot-headed Montague, mighty to swear,
The little fat man with his pretty white hair;

"From bishops in Britain, who butchers are grown,
From slaves that would die for a smile from the throne;
From assemblies that vote against Congress proceedings—
(Who now see the fruit of their stupid misleadings);

"From Tryon the mighty, who flies from our city,
And swelled with importance, disdains the committee,—
(But since he is pleased to proclaim us his foes,
What the devil care we where the devil he goes);

"From the scoundrel, Lord North, who would bind us in chains,
From a dunce of a king who was born without brains,
The utmost extent of whose sense is to see
That reigning and making of buttons agree;

"From an island that bullies, and hectors, and swears,
I send up to heaven my wishes and prayers
That we, disunited, may freemen be still,
And Britain go on—to be damned, if she will!"[1]

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau, 58–59.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SATIRICAL MASTERPIECE OF JOHN TRUMBULL: 1775.

I.—John Trumbull in 1773 abandons letters for the law—Enters the law office of John Adams in Boston—His verses bidding farewell to verse-making—Finds himself in the vortex of Revolutionary politics.

II.—He relapses into verse-making—"The Prophecy of Balaam," "The Destruction of Babylon," "An Elegy on the Times, Composed at Boston during the Operation of the Port Bill"—His first words of harshness toward the mother country, whose ruin he predicts—His reluctance to surrender himself to the domination of politics.

III.—Trumbull returns to New Haven in November, 1774—Publishes in August, 1775, a Hudibrastic burlesque on General Gage's Proclamation—The first canto of "M'Fingal" is sent to the press before the end of 1775—Is published in January, 1776—The action of the poem is just after the day of Lexington and Concord—The hero, Squire M'Fingal—John Adams portrayed as Honorius.

IV.—The town meeting to consider the outbreak of hostilities—Speech of Honorius against British aggressions, General Gage, and the Tories.

V.—Squire M'Fingal makes reply—Denounces the Whigs for stupidity, for lack of patriotism, for greed and cowardice—Vindicates the military proceedings of General Gage—Predicts the utter defeat of the rebellion, with titles and estates in the hands of the Tories, and the Whigs all hanged or reduced to slavery—The indignant reply of Honorius is drowned in Tory catcalls—The meeting breaks up in confusion.

VI.—Such was the plot of the poem in its original form—The poem completed in four cantos and published in 1782—Outline of the story as finished—Its adherence to the three unities.

VII.—The traditional criticism of "M'Fingal" as an imitation of "Hudibras"—Particulars of resemblance and of dissimilarity between the two poems—Trumbull's real master in satire not Butler, but Churchill.

VIII.—The breadth and variety of Trumbull's literary training shown in this poem—His delicate and effective use of parody—The essential originality of "M'Fingal"—A genuine embodiment of the spirit and life of the American people in 1775—It employs satire on behalf of lofty and humane objects—Contrast therein with "Hudibras" and "The Dunciad"—The enormous popularity and influence of "M'Fingal" during the Revolution and in several national emergencies since then.

I.

AFTER an early literary career altogether notable for its versatility and its brilliance, John Trumbull,[1] like so many other young Americans, before and since then, with an inward vocation for a life of letters, turned away to a calling far more likely to supply him with bread—the profession of the law. It was in November, 1773,—at the very time when the tea ships were sailing toward us with their cargoes of unimagined disquietude,—that he was admitted to the bar of Connecticut. Being then but twenty-three years of age and not desirous of settling down immediately to practice, he went to Boston with the view of spending a year of study in the law office of John Adams, having his residence during that time in the house of another political chieftain, Thomas Cushing. At this important moment in his life, as he was giving up the cloistered service of poetry and of fine letters for that of a worldly and stormy profession, he wrote in verse an eternal farewell to verse-making, and said to

"nonsense, sighs, and love, good-bye";

at the same time saluting, with a rather mocking reverence, those bewigged and august masters, in whose well-rewarded footsteps he hoped soon to tread:

"In solemn coif before my eyes,
I see the awful Coke arise;
There Bracton, Fleta, Blackstone, Wood,
And fifty more, not understood,
. . . . . .
Enthroned appear in awful state,
And point and call me to their seat.
I come, ye lawyers! oh prepare
The wig of wide, portentous air;
The robe of law, whose solemn grace

[1] A full account of Trumbull's earlier career, is given in Chapter ix. of the present work.

Gives wisdom to the important face ;
The conscience mild that sleeps at ease,
Nor trembles at the touch of fees ;
The look triumphant in the wrong,
And endless impudence of tongue." [1]

The single year which Trumbull thus passed in Boston, proved to be one of stirring and even world-famous business for that city, which was then, in fact, the very vortex of Revolutionary politics. Not long after his arrival there, he may have seen the British tea ships, as they came sailing up the harbor, and may have heard the yells of those amateur Mohawks who soon afterward rose upon the well-paved war-path, and presented in person their effectual argument against the landing of the execrated cargo. In Boston he must have been, when, a few months later, there fell upon the city the assurance of the choice and peculiar wrath of the king, and the doom of commercial annihilation at the hands of a parliament bought and owned by the king. Many weeks before Trumbull had ended his term of legal study in Boston, his illustrious preceptor had entirely ceased to receive clients, and had gone away to Philadelphia to take his seat in the first Continental Congress; while Boston itself had become inexorably committed to a huge law suit, to which the parties were two angry nations,—a bit of energetic litigation to which none of the precedents which Trumbull was then studying would apply, and in which the advocates most actively engaged on either side would be unlikely to wear wigs or silk gowns.

II.

Notwithstanding all his vows of devotion to the new mistress whom he was there to serve, Trumbull could not forget his earlier love. Even during the hurly-burly of this year in Boston, and amid his ostensible preoccupation with legal

[1] Trumbull MSS.

studies, he yielded his secret homage to poetry, writing, in December, 1773, "The Prophecy of Balaam"[1]; in January, 1774, "The Destruction of Babylon"[2]; and in August, 1774, "An Elegy on the Times: Composed at Boston during the operation of the Port Bill."[3] It might well be that his environment should furnish the tints and even the materials of his verse. Certain it is, that there runs through these several poems a vein of sternness, and even of melancholy: they abound in the imagery of tumult, of bloodshed, of desolated cities, of empires given over to wreck and decay. In the last of the three, the poet utters for the first time words of harshness toward the mother country; and he closes the poem with a prophetic picture in which—more than half a century before Macaulay had foreseen the arrival at London Bridge of his fatal New Zealander—Trumbull portrays England as slumbering in a desert isle "in the skirt of day," her fields thick with matted thorns, piles of ruin loading her dreary shore, her baffled genius sobbing a futile prayer to Oblivion to come and draw a veil over her latest shame—her unmotherly and unnatural treatment of her American children.

This fierce note, which one now for the first time observes in Trumbull's verses,—this strain of passionate sympathy with the direction and tone of later Revolutionary politics—marks the moment of his arrival at that culminating stage in his career as a writer, wherein he becomes an historical personage, one of the real forces to be reckoned with as we study the epoch which brought to us our national Independence. Henceforward, all his fine literary accomplishments, his subtlety, his wit, his gift for ridicule, his training in satire, are to be at the service of the popular cause, and are to produce in "M'Fingal," one of the world's masterpieces in political badinage. From such an engulfment and absorption of himself in a grim practical struggle, he seems for a time to have drawn back,—

[1] "Poetical Works," ii. 141–146. [2] Ibid. 195–201.
[3] Ibid. 205–217.

moved thereto doubtless by his instincts as a man of letters, and by his love for the amenities and the gayeties of that form of literature which then took pains to define itself as polite. In the earlier part of the year 1773, for example, as he was projecting a series of entertaining literary essays, he had congratulated himself on the fact that "the ferment of politics" was, as he supposed, "pretty much subsided," and that at last the country was to enjoy a "mild interval from the struggles of patriotism and self-interest, from noise and confusion, Wilkes and liberty."[1] But, as the weeks and the months passed over him in Boston, and as he continued to view all incidents from the fiery interior of that political circle which included many of the most radical leaders in the Revolutionary movement, it is not strange that, in his mind, all merely æsthetic or dainty considerations gave way before the rugged necessities of the situation. Thenceforward, with no hesitation, with no half-heartedness, Trumbull is the scholar in politics,—the poet and the wit fighting the common enemy with an exquisite weapon which but one other American at that time could use so effectively as he.

III.

Already during this stirring year in Boston, his pen had been far busier than is indicated by the foregoing list of poems which he wrote at that time. He knew by instinct the uses to be made of anonymous journalism; and from his secret armory, he shot forth through the newspapers his own sparkling and caustic comments on the fateful events with which that year was so thickly strown, and through which the American people were hastening, half-unconsciously, toward an inappeasable revolt, and toward national autonomy. Moreover, after his return to New Haven in November, 1774, he still kept up this sort of literary-

[1] "The Correspondent," No. 9, in "Connecticut Journal," etc., for Feb. 12, 1773.

political warfare, becoming for the purpose a regular contributor to "The Connecticut Courant." It was in that paper that he published on the 7th and 14th of August, 1775, a Hudibrastic burlesque of General Gage's magniloquent proclamation to "the infatuated multitude,"—a poem of some two hundred and sixteen lines, from which at least fifty were shortly afterward reproduced in his great satire of "M'Fingal."[1] Upon the writing of that celebrated satire he must have been engaged during the autumn of 1775; for it was in January, 1776, at Philadelphia—in the same place, and almost at the same time with Thomas Paine's pamphlet, "Common Sense"—that the first canto of "M'Fingal" made its appearance.[2]

The time of the poem is shortly after the 19th of April, 1775,—within those hot-footed weeks of astonishment, grief, anger, derision, and defiance, which followed the news of bloodshed at Lexington and Concord, and of the scrambling retreat of the ministerial troops from those two glorious massacres back again to Boston. The scene of the poem is laid in a certain unnamed New England town, apparently not far from Boston. The distinction of this town arises from the fact that it is the home of one Squire M'Fingal, a Scottish-American politician, who is at once a blustering champion of the doctrine of unlimited submission to parliament, and an orator of stentorian lungs, whose appalling volubility, when engaged in the oratorical act, is subject to an occasional reënforcement from

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[1] This fact was first pointed out by J. Hammond Trumbull, in "The Hist. Mag.," for Jan., 1868, in an article entitled "The Origin of M'Fingal." Copies of this article were issued separately, to one of which my references are made.

[2] "M'Fingal: A Modern Epic Poem. Canto First, or the Town Meeting. Philadelphia. Printed and Sold by William and Thomas Bradford, at the London Coffee House, 1775." Notwithstanding this date, the poem was not published till Jan., 1776. It has 40 pages, and closes thus: "End of Canto First." The only copy I have seen is that of the N. Y. Hist. Soc. The copy from which I shall quote, is the London reprint of the same year, formerly belonging to Jared Sparks, and now to Cornell University.

a "Scottish gift of second-sight,"—a mysterious access of cerebral excitement under which he ascends and soars above all sublunar trammels of fact and common sense, and pours torrents of prophetic calamity upon the heads of his antagonists. In the frequent combats which M'Fingal had in townmeeting with the champions of colonial resistance, this lucky gift of his brought him some capital advantages; for, if ever embarrassed by a dearth of information derived from the past, he was able to turn the tide in his favor by an unlimited supply of information respecting the future. On such occasions, again and again, he

> "Made dreadful slaughter in his course,
> O'erthrew provincials, foot and horse;
> Brought armies o'er by sudden pressings
> Of Hanoverians, Swiss, and Hessians;
> Feasted with blood his Scottish clan,
> And hang'd all rebels, to a man;
> Divided their estates and pelf,
> And took a goodly share himself."

This typical New England town, thus favored by the presence and the fame of so great a man, was divided with respect to the one great question of parliamentary authority, into two nearly equal factions. Of the conservative faction, the chief, of course, was M'Fingal; while the radicals were led by an eloquent and fearless politician who bore the significant name of Honorius, and whose portrait seems to be that of Trumbull's preceptor in the law, John Adams.

IV.

And now, in the midst of all the seething and fury of passion into which the people of the several colonies are thrown by the ghastly tidings from Lexington and Concord, the people of M'Fingal's town are summoned to a meeting for the purpose of considering the dangers and duties that

lie before them, M'Fingal himself being just then absent on a political visit to Boston. The place of assemblage was, of course, that edifice of miscellaneous utility, then called neither church nor chapel, but only meetinghouse,—

> "That house, which, loth a rule to break,
> Serv'd Heaven but one day in the week;
> Open the rest for all supplies
> Of news and politics and lies."

Within that edifice, thronging all the aisles and pews, now stand

> "voters of all colors,
> Whigs, Tories, orators and bawlers,
> With every tongue in either faction,
> Prepared, like minute-men, for action."

High above the crowd, on the pulpit stairs, looms the town constable, with staff in hand, himself and his staff the embodiment and symbol of the irresistible law of Demos. Just above him, in the pulpit itself, stands the moderator, —his majestic head

> "In grandeur o'er the cushion bowed,
> Like Sol half-seen behind a cloud."

In the absence of Squire M'Fingal, who would himself have had precedence in speech, the assembly is addressed by the bold Honorius; but before he has proceeded far, in comes the potent Squire himself, and, with many a frown darkening his face, sits him down, while the orator, unawed by M'Fingal's entrance, storms onward in his fiery harangue. For many ages, says he, has Britain been a mighty power in the world, wielding her strength, in justice and in kindness, invincible to her foes, a tower of safety and a shield to her children; and under her benign maternal care have all these American provinces risen and flourished. But, alas,

states, like persons, have their periods of old age and dotage. That period has now been reached by our poor old mother, Britain, whose dotage is shown not only by weakness in war and by folly in statesmanship, but especially by fantastic pretensions to unlimited authority over her grown-up children:

"So Britain, midst her airs so flighty,
Now took a whim to be almighty;
Urged on to desperate heights of frenzy,
Affirmed her own omnipotency;
Would rather ruin all her race,
Than 'bate supremacy an ace."

In accordance with this spirit of frantic and senile arrogance, she made an idol of the Authority of Parliament, and set it up for us, her American children, to adore:

"Proclaimed its power and right divine,
And called for worship at its shrine,
And for poor heretics, to burn us,
Bade North prepare his fiery furnace."

Against all this wrong, we opposed our most earnest supplications; but disregarding us and our prayers, she proceeded to destroy our ancient guarantees of political safety:

"Annulled our charters of releases,
And tore our title-deeds in pieces;
Then signed her warrants of ejection,
And gallows raised to stretch our necks on;
And on these errands sent, in rage,
Her bailiff and her hangman, Gage;
And at his heels, like dogs to bait us,
Despatched her 'posse comitatus.'"

As to General Gage—that wind-bag warrior whose professional enterprise found its most glorious vent in a crusade of thunderous proclamations—he, indeed,

" was chose to represent
The omnipotence of parliament ;
And as old heroes gained by shifts,
From gods, as poets tell, their gifts,
Our general, as his actions show,
Gained like assistance from below,—
By Satan graced with full supplies
From all his magazine of lies."

Nevertheless, though Gage be but a dunce in war—be only a rhetorical general—we must not forget that even so paltry a creature as he, is capable of causing great mischief; for

" meanest reptiles are most venomous,
And simpletons most dangerous enemies."

Then, turning full upon M'Fingal and his Tory followers, he taunts them with being the representatives of a party composed of the servile apologists for the oppression and ruin of their own country,—

" a venal band,
A dastard race who long have sold
Their souls and consciences for gold ;
Who wish to stab their country's vitals,
If they might heir surviving titles ;
. . . . . .
Priests who, if Satan should sit down
To make a Bible of his own,
Would gladly, for the sake of mitres,
Turn his inspired and sacred writers ;
Lawyers who, should he wish to prove
His title t' his old seat above,
Would, if his cause he 'd give 'em fees in,
Bring writs of ' Entry sur disseisin,'
Plead for him boldly at the session,
And hope to put him in possession ;
Merchants who, for his kindly aid,

Would make him partners in their trade;
And judges who would list his pages
For proper liveries and wages,
And who as humbly cringe and bow
To all his mortal servants now."

For such recreant Americans, says the orator,

"Contempts ineffable await,
And public infamy forlorn,
Dread hate and everlasting scorn."

V.

At the very climax of this invective, M'Fingal, stung beyond endurance, gives a signal to his followers, who instantly break forth into a tumult of yells, hisses, groans, and jeers, under which the speech of Honorius is extinguished. Then comes M'Fingal's turn. You Whigs, he says, can only rail: you have no heads for reason. If it were not so, you would long since have been overpowered by our arguments. For have not our high-church clergy,—Walter, Auchmuty, Peters, Cooper, and Seabury,—proved beyond all doubt that kings and parliaments have a divine right to oppress and tease their subjects at pleasure; and hence that

"sure perdition must await
The man who rises 'gainst the state?"

Has not this same noble doctrine been supported, also, by an innumerable swarm of lay scribblers, of whom are Brush, Cowper, Wilkins, Chandler, Booth? Has not Leonard, "our scribbler general," been able to show,

"clear as sun in noonday heavens,
You did not feel a single grievance;
Demonstrate all your opposition
Sprung from the eggs of foul sedition?"

Has not

> "our grave Judge Sewall hit
> The summit of newspaper wit,"

and for his great master, General Gage, drawn

> "proclamations, works of toil,
> In true sublime of scarecrow style?"

This cannonade of taunting questions, in which M'Fingal really exhibits the preposterousness of his own cause, is interrupted by a volley of sarcasms from Honorius, upon whom again M'Fingal retorts,—

> "Your boasted patriotism is scarce,
> And country's love is but a farce;
> And after all the proofs you bring,
> We Tories know there 's no such thing,—
> . . . . . .
> That self is still, in either faction,
> The only principle of action;
> The loadstone, whose attracting tether
> Keeps the politic world together;
> And spite of all your double-dealing,
> We Tories know 't is so, by feeling."

And not only, continues M'Fingal, have you Whigs no such thing as patriotism, but you have no such thing as courage. Besides, even had you courage, what could you accomplish against the imperial strength of Great Britain?

> "'T would not, methinks, be labor lost,
> If you sit down and count the cost,
> And ere you call your Yankees out,
> First think what work you 've set about.
> Have you not roused, his force to try on,
> That grim old beast, the British lion?
> And know you not, that at a sup
> He 's large enough to eat you up?"

Then, too, have you forgotten those nimble allies of Britain, the savage Indians,

> "With each a hatchet in his hand,
> T' amuse themselves with scalping knives,
> And butcher children and your wives?"

And do you consider, also, how Britain has already

> "assayed her notes,
> To rouse your slaves to cut your throats?
> . . . . . .
> And has not Gage, her missionary,
> Turned many an Afric slave to Tory?
> . . . . . .
> As friends to gov'rnment, did not he
> Their slaves at Boston late set free;
> Enlist them all in black parade,
> Set off with regimental red?"

When, therefore, you remember this redoubtable Gage, with all his league of "Indians, British troops, and negroes," how can you look for any fate but discomfiture? To these vaunting questions Honorius replies, by a contemptuous review of that warrior's achievements, detailing

> "The annals of his first great year:
> While wearying out the Tories' patience,
> He spent his breath in proclamations;
> While all his mighty noise and vapor
> Was used in wrangling upon paper;
> . . . . . .
> While strokes alternate stunned the nation,
> Protest, address, and proclamation;
> And speech met speech, fib clashed with fib,
> And Gage still answered squib for squib."

By these taunts, M'Fingal is goaded to a pretended vindication of the General's conduct of affairs,—a vindication in which the ridiculous incidents of this futile year are set

forth with a mock gravity that gives to the whole an extremely absurd effect. Finally, M'Fingal, ever conscious that his real strength lies in prophecy rather than in history, passes into one of his paroxysms of vaticination; and the remainder of his speech becomes a specific and confident description of the annihilating victory which the British forces are soon to gain over the rebels, and of the splendid reckoning with which the ministry are to reward the services of the faithful American Tories, when

> "The power displayed in Gage's banners
> Shall cut Amer'can lands to manors,
> And o'er our happy conquered ground
> Dispense estates and titles round!
> Behold the world will stare at new sets
> Of home-made Earls in Massachusetts;
> Admire, arrayed in ducal tassels,
> Your Ol'vers, Hutchinsons, and Vassals;
> See joined in ministerial work
> His Grace of Albany and York!
> What lordships from each carv'd estate,
> On our New York assembly wait!
> What titled Jauncys, Gales, and Billops,
> Lord Brush, Lord Wilkins, and Lord Phillips!
> In wide-sleeved pomp of goodly guise,
> What solemn rows of bishops rise!
> Aloft a Card'nal's hat is spread
> O'er punster Cooper's rev'rend head!
> In Vardell, that poetic zealot,
> I view a lawn-bedizened prelate!
> What mitres fall, as 't is their duty,
> On heads of Chandler and Auchmuty!
> Knights, viscounts, barons shall ye meet
> As thick as pavements in the street!
> Even I, perhaps—Heaven speed my claim—
> Shall fix a Sir before my name."

Moreover, in this paradise of triumphant American Toryism, where and what shall be the portion of the audacious men

who have stirred up such treasonable commotion? Ah, they also will have their use; for

> "Whigs subdued, in slavish awe,
> Our wood shall hew, our water draw,
> And bless that mildness, when past hope,
> Which sav'd their necks from noose of rope.
> For since our leaders have decreed
> Their blacks who join us shall be freed,
> To hang the conquered Whigs, we all see,
> Would prove but weak and thriftless policy,—
> Except their chiefs—the vulgar knaves
> Will do more good preserved for slaves." [1]

This frank avowal of the hopes and the hatreds of the American supporters of the ministry, gives to the Whig champion an advantage which he does not fail to use. Turning away, therefore, from M'Fingal with the sneer,—

> "We can't confute your second-sight:
> We shall be slaves, and you a knight.
> These things must come, but I divine
> They 'll come not in your day, or mine!—"

he lays aside his mocking tone, and with simple and genuine passion appeals to his political friends, pointing out that now was made plain what they had to expect should their enemies triumph; and with burning words he summons them to a fearless and a determined fight for whatsoever in this world can make life honorable or home sweet. Soon, however, the Tories, unable to restrain their anger, interrupt his speech with their howls and their catcalls, with the shuffling of feet and the creaking of pew doors; and as the moderator, to quell the disorder, thumps frantically on the pulpit cushion, and adds to the noise by his cries of "silence," and as the constable increases the difficulty of

[1] The last six lines are cited from the edition of 1820, contained in "The Poetical Works" of Trumbull, i. 77.

hearing anybody by bawling out, "Pray hear the moderator," and as the enraged partisans on both sides are about to come to blows,

"on a sudden, from without,
Arose a loud terrific shout,"

whereupon the angry partisans, with whom curiosity appears to have been more potent than pugnacity, tear themselves away from the fascinations of the meeting, and run out of the house; while Squire M'Fingal, bidding the constable attend him, sallies forth, with drawn sword and a ferocious countenance, to disperse the mob. In the meantime, however, the wretched moderator, quite demented by fright, has slipped down from the pulpit, and crawled under a bench; but when, after some time, he had sufficiently rallied to be able to raise his head from under the bench, and peeping out had discovered that all his belligerent subjects had taken themselves off, he gravely emerged from his place of retreat, and

"left alone, with solemn face,
Adjourned them without time or place."

VI.

Such was this notable poem in its original form,—a poem of about fifteen hundred lines, and obviously broken off with its story half told. Nevertheless, it was in this form that "M'Fingal" did its enormous work in stimulating the thought and passion of the American Revolution; and it was in this form, also, that it won its first fame in the world. Not until after the surrender of Cornwallis, in October, 1781,—when the physical struggle of the Revolution had come to an end,—did the author set about the task of finishing the poem according to the plan which he had at the first framed for it. Dividing the portion already published

into two cantos, and adding a third canto, and a fourth, he published the whole in the latter part of 1782.[1]

The portion thus added fits happily into what precedes; and the work, as thus made complete, bears every mark of its author's uncommon appreciation of artistic symmetry, and of the classic unities of time and place. In literary quality, also, in acuteness, in wit, in crispness of phrase, in vivacity and drollery of incident, the later portion is even stronger than the earlier; while the final development of its simple plot leads to a series of climaxes full of grotesqueness and of satiric power, and true also to the very life of that period, in which partisan emotion was inclined to express itself in certain corporeal pleasantries the humor of which was more apparent to the perpetrators than to the victims.

In the last two cantos Honorius does not appear; and the cause of the Revolution, having been thus amply vindicated by him in the sphere of reason and of wit, is thenceforward left to the rough championship of a mob of rollicking and riotous patriots, who, under the provocation of a most irritating harangue from M'Fingal, lay hands upon that obstreperous Tory, and subject him to those personal indignities which they, in the jubilance of their animal spirits, regard as comic. Finally, however, at close of day, after the mob has dispersed, contemptuously leaving M'Fingal to the new glory of his tarry and feathery costume, and glued, as it were, by the rear, to that liberty pole around which they had taken such distressing liberty with him, he succeeds after much effort in pulling himself loose. In this plight, he skulks through the village to his home, whither by secret message he summons his political allies to a clandestine meeting that very night. The place of their meeting is, perforce, the cellar. There, in that ignoble auditorium, huddled together and crouching low in their fear, they are addressed by M'Fingal, who emerges for the purpose from

[1] "Hartford: Printed by Hudson and Goodwin, near the Great Bridge, 1782." This editio princeps is very properly used by Benson J. Lossing for his reprint of "M'Fingal," with introduction and notes, New York, 1857.

the safe obscurity of his turnip bin. It is his last great paroxysm of prophetic utterance. All the disaster, and ignominy, and bitterness of the defeat which awaits them in the war then just begun, pass before him in vision, and the whole is reproduced by him in words for the benefit of his miserable companions; whereupon the Whigs, who,

"the news have found
Of Tories must'ring under ground,"

are heard approaching the house. Loud shouts fill the air; rough blows are rained upon the door. Escape seems impossible. The terror-stricken Tories call upon the very cellar walls to hide them from the wrath of their implacable pursuers. One creeps into a box; another crawls under a tub; still another tries to obliterate his identity by placing himself behind a row of cabbage heads. In the darkness, however, M'Fingal, who has now had enough of the mirthful ways of the Whigs, makes his escape through a secret window, and leaving

"his constituents in the lurch,"

sneaks away to Boston, to return no more.

VII.

The traditional and, indeed, the stereotyped criticism upon "M'Fingal," that it is an imitation of "Hudibras," is undoubtedly the judgment most naturally formed at the first glance, and from indications apparent on the surface of the two poems. Thus, "M'Fingal" certainly follows "Hudibras" in its general literary type—that of the burlesque epic; and yet even here one needs to observe the distinction that, while Butler chose the low burlesque, which does not admit of grave or elevated passages, his follower adopted the high burlesque, and availed himself of the

privilege it confers, by transitions that are serious and dignified. Then, too, the verse of "M'Fingal" is obviously the verse which since Butler's time has been called Hudibrastic, that is, the rhymed iambic tetrameters of the earlier English poets, depraved to the droll uses of burlesque by the Butlerian peculiarities, to wit, the clipping of words, the suppression of syllables, colloquial jargon, a certain rapid, ridiculous jig-like movement, and the jingle of unexpected, fantastic, and often imperfect rhymes. Furthermore, in many places Trumbull has so perfectly caught the manner of Butler, that he easily passes for him in quotation. This is especially the case with some of those shrewd aphorismal couplets which abound in "M'Fingal" as they do in "Hudibras," and which, as taken from the former, are sometimes attributed to the latter.[1]

Beyond these aspects of resemblance, it is doubtful whether the relation of "M'Fingal" to "Hudibras" be not rather one of contrast than of imitation. The hero of the one poem is a pedantic Puritan radical of the time of Oliver Cromwell; the hero of the other is a garrulous and preposterous high-church Scottish-American conservative of the time of George the Third. Each poem is an attempt to exhibit, chiefly through the speeches and the ludicrous and lugubrious adventures of its hero, the questions at issue in a period of revolutionary convulsion; but the earlier poem is a satire on the ideas and methods of the party of progress, while the later one is a satire on the ideas and methods of the party of conservatism. Moreover, in plot, in arrangement, in incident, there is in "M'Fingal" scarcely a trait that can be accounted as a reproduction of "Hudibras."

[1] Two notable illustrations of this remark may be cited. One is taken from the first canto of "M'Fingal":

> "But optics sharp it needs, I ween,
> To see what is not to be seen."

The other is from the third canto:

> "No man e'er felt the halter draw,
> With good opinion of the law."

Finally, in the essential qualities of Hudibrastic wit,—in oddity of comparison, in extravagance of fancy, and in the amusing effects produced by a sudden and grotesque assemblage of remote historical and literary allusions,—there is in "M'Fingal" little apparent effort to follow its prototype.

The truth is, that a much closer intellectual kinship existed between Trumbull and Charles Churchill, than between Trumbull and Samuel Butler; and so far as Trumbull's originality in satire was moulded and tinged by the manner of any other satirist, it was not so much by the author of "Hudibras," as it was by his own powerful contemporary, the author of the "Prophecy of Famine," and of "The Ghost." Churchill was Trumbull's true model. It is to Churchill's influence that we are to attribute peculiarities in "M'Fingal" far more fundamental and decisive than any which can be traced to the influence of any other writer. Indeed, what should perhaps be regarded as the most serious fault in "M'Fingal,"—the alien and unreal note imparted to this New England mock-epic by the prominence of the Scottish element in the satire,—can be accounted for in this way, and in this way only. Of such a poem the hero at least should have been not only a native but a typical New Englander, and thus the main force of the satire should have been made to fall, as the author undoubtedly meant that it should fall, upon that powerful class of New England conservatives who then stood forth against the politics of the Revolution. By taking for this Yankee epic a title which, owing to peculiar literary associations, was then intensely Scottish, and by concentrating the reader's derision upon its Scottish hero, and upon Malcolm, his Scottish confederate, a certain local genuineness is lost to the poem; the true direction of the satire is turned aside; and a pair of Scottish Loyalists are dragged in and thrust forward as the real objects of all this satiric venom which really belonged to Loyalists of the pure American type, like Hutchinson, and Leonard, and Oliver. By a glance at the nearly contemporary satires of Churchill, particularly at the

two that are mentioned above,—in which the leading note is an angry and contemptuous vituperation of the Scottish element then so prominent in English politics and in English society,—it will be made clear that it was from Churchill that Trumbull derived a trait which, though entirely pertinent and very effective in an English satire of that time, had much less fitness in an American satire, and therefore gave to it a rather pointless and weakening feature.

It would be a mistake, however, to infer that the influence of Churchill upon Trumbull is to be discovered only in Trumbull's faults. This is very far from being the case. For example, the verse of "M'Fingal" seems to have a flow and a freedom characteristic of Churchill: this verse is indeed Hudibrastic, but in the main it is the Hudibrastic verse, not of "Hudibras," but of "The Ghost." Moreover, in the sprightliness and energy of "M'Fingal," in the robustness of its thought, in its glow of expression, and in the special quality of its wit, which, for the most part, is direct and spontaneous rather than artificial and subtle, one is apt to recognize the sturdy and invigorating tone of the later English satirist.

VIII.

We should be doing injustice, also, to the variety and the breadth of Trumbull's literary training, if, in dealing with the composition of "M'Fingal" as revealing the influence of its author's literary masters, we should discover only the influence of Churchill and of Butler. Trumbull was, according to the best opportunity of his place and time, a catholic student of letters; and in all his work as a satirist, particularly in this work, one finds in many quiet and indirect ways, the evidence of his manifold contact with all the masters of his art.

As regards the literary relationships of this poem, one notable peculiarity is its delicate and effective use of parody as a means of humorous effect: itself a burlesque epic, it carries the privilege of burlesque into every detail of style. Through Trumbull's memory, which was of the miraculous

sort, there seemed to be ever floating strains and melodies borne to him from the myriad-voiced choir of English song; and continually, as he told of his droll hero, and of his hero's adventures, snatches of English classic verse became entangled in his lines, and were detained by him there, and were comically transformed into travesty. Thus, through the opening lines of "M'Fingal" one hears amusing echoes of the opening lines of "Hudibras"; and as from this beginning of the first canto, one reads on and on to the end of the last canto, the ear is continually caught, and the fancy is titillated, by playful reverberations from the ballad of "Chevy Chase," from "Paradise Lost," from the poetry of Dryden, of Swift, of Pope, of Prior, of Macpherson, of Gray.

After all that may be said of the uses which Trumbull made of his literary masters, it remains true that his poem of "M'Fingal" is a work of essential originality.[1] The form is an old one; but into that old form Trumbull put the new life of his own soul, and of his own time. He did not invent the burlesque epic; but he did invent his own treatment, under the form of a burlesque epic, of the social and political dispute involved in the American Revolution. In the construction of his poem, he has shown not only originality, but high artistic skill. The plot has a unity, a symmetry, a consistency which one looks for in vain in such masterpieces as "Hudibras" and "The Dunciad"; the story, though a slight one, is sufficient for the comically didactic purpose for which it is framed; in the management of this story the author avoids those bewildering digressions and those excesses of loquacity in which Butler so often loses himself and the company of his readers; finally, the story advances, by a natural and life-like progress, through a variety of ridiculous circumstances, to a conclusion wherein the ludicrous quality of the satire reaches a fitting and powerful culmination.

[1] This conclusion is expressed by Stedman with his usual insight and justice. Of "M'Fingal" he says that "it shows genuine originality, although written after a model." "Poets of America," 35.

No literary production was ever a more genuine embodiment of the spirit and life of a people, in the midst of a stirring and world-famous conflict, than is "M'Fingal" an embodiment of the spirit and life of the American people, in the midst of that stupendous conflict which formed our great epoch of national deliverance. Here we find presented to us, with the vividness of a contemporary experience, the very issues which then divided friends and families and neighborhoods, as they did entire colonies, and at last the empire itself; the very persons and passions of the opposing parties; the very spirit and accent and method of political controversy at that time; and at last, those riotous frolics and that hilarious lawlessness with which the Revolutionary patriots were fond of demonstrating their disapproval of the politics of their antagonists. No one can now fully understand and enjoy "M'Fingal" who is not, in a rather special sense, a student of the American Revolution; but he who is so, will find in it an authentic, a marvelously accurate, a most diverting rehearsal of the logic, the anger, and the humor of an epoch in our national experience which can never cease to have for us either a profound importance or an absorbing charm.

Satire is, of course, one of the less noble forms of literary expression; and in satire uttering itself through burlesque, there is special danger of the presence of qualities which are positively ignoble. Yet never was satire employed in a better cause, or for loftier objects, or in a more disinterested spirit. Often has satire been but the ally of partisan selfishness and malice, or of the meanness of personal spite. To add derision to defeat, to overwhelm with scoffs and with pitiless ridicule a great party which was already overwhelmed with disaster, to fling mocks and jibes at men who, never lacking ability or courage, were then crushed and powerless, and able to move neither tongue nor hand in reply—that was the object of the author of "Hudibras." To appease the stings of literary vanity, to avenge himself

on his rivals, to make the world ring with his wrath at a group of paltry and obscure personal enemies—that was the object of the author of "The Dunciad." Now the author of "M'Fingal" wrote his satire under no personal or petty motive. His poem was a terrific assault on men who, in his opinion, were the public enemies of his country; and he did not delay that assault until they were unable to strike back. "M'Fingal" belongs, indeed, to a type of literature never truly lovely or truly beautiful,—a type of literature hard, bitter, vengeful, often undignified; but the hardness of "M'Fingal," its bitterness, its vengeful force are directed against persons believed by its author to be the foes —the fashionable and the powerful foes—of human liberty; if at times it surrenders its own dignity, it does so on behalf of the greater dignity of human nature.

That "M'Fingal" is, in its own sphere, a masterpiece, that it has within itself a sort of power never attaching to a mere imitation, is shown by the vast and prolonged impression it has made upon the American people. Immediately upon its first publication it perfectly seized and held the attention of the public. It was everywhere read. "Its popularity was unexampled."[1] It became "the property of newsmongers, hawkers, peddlers, and petty chapmen."[2] Probably as many as forty editions of it have been issued in this country and in England. It was one of the forces which drove forward that enormous movement of human thought and passion which we describe as the American Revolution; and in each of the great agitations of American thought and passion which have occurred since that time, occasioned by the French Revolution, by the war of 1812, and by the war which extinguished American slavery, this scorching satire against social reaction, this jeering burlesque on political obstructiveness, has been reëdited, has been republished, has been sent forth again and again into the

[1] J. Hammond Trumbull, "The Origin of M'Fingal," 11–12.

[2] "The Poetical Works" of Trumbull, ed. 1820, Mem., i. 19.

world, to renew its mirthful and scornful activity in the ever-renewing battle for human progress.[1]

[1] I have had in my hands the following editions of "M'Fingal": Philadelphia, 1775; London, 1776; Hartford, 1782; Boston, 1785; Philadelphia, 1787; Philadelphia, 1792; London, 1792; New York, 1795; Boston, 1799; Baltimore, 1812; Hallowell, 1813; Hudson, 1816; Hartford, 1820; Boston, 1826; Philadelphia, 1839; Hartford, 1856; New York, 1864; New York, 1881.

CHAPTER XXI.

THOMAS PAINE AND THE OUTBREAK OF THE DOCTRINE OF INDEPENDENCE: JANUARY–JUNE, 1776.

I.—Paine's arrival in America late in the year 1774, introduced by a letter from Franklin—His previous history in England.

II.—His first employment in Philadelphia—His eagerness for information as to American politics—His gifts and limitations for political discussion.

III.—His early opinion strongly in favor of reconciliation—The events of the year 1775 changed his opinion, and prompted him to write the first open and unqualified argument for American Independence.

IV.—History of American opinion as to Independence prior to 1776—The controversy had been conducted on a perpetual disavowal of the purpose or desire for Independence.

V.—The title of Paine's pamphlet happily indicates its character—An appeal from technical law to common sense—Its argument introduced by crude and pungent affirmations as to government in general and the British government in particular—A new era in American politics created by the transfer of the dispute from argument to arms—All considerations in force prior to April 19, 1775, are like last year's almanac—Disposal of the arguments based on filial sentiment, and on our former prosperity and happiness as colonies.

VI.—The positive disadvantages of the American connection with England—Interferes with the freedom of American commerce—Involves us in European wars and quarrels—The absurdity of a great continent remaining dependent on any external power—Our business too weighty and intricate to be managed any longer by a power distant from us and ignorant of us—Reconciliation, even if now possible, would be ruinous—The American people are competent to save American society from anarchy—Solemn warning to the American opponents of Independence—Freedom, a fugitive hunted round the globe, begs for an asylum in America.

VII.—The pamphlet, even in its crudities, exactly fitted for its purpose—Effectiveness of its method of thought and statement—It uttered at the right moment what multitudes were waiting for—Numerous editions of it in America and Europe—Its authorship at first unknown, but ascribed to several eminent Americans, especially to Franklin.

VIII.—Evidence in contemporary writings of its enormous effects on public opinion between January and June, 1776.

I.

On the last day of November, 1774, there arrived at Philadelphia a solitary English pilgrim, named Thomas Paine, nearly thirty-eight years of age, having with him neither scrip, nor bread, nor money in his purse, but having nevertheless an abundant willingness to make his way in the new world by his wits, particularly "as a clerk, or assistant tutor in a school, or assistant surveyor."[1] For this rather forlorn adventurer, whose most imminent business in Philadelphia at that time was to "procure subsistence at least," the worst disadvantages of his condition were perhaps nearly balanced by a single item of good luck: he had brought with him from London a letter of introduction from Benjamin Franklin, testifying that the bearer was "an ingenious, worthy young man," and invoking on his behalf the primary and inexpensive charities of "advice and countenance."

Up to that time in his career, life had been upon the whole a somewhat baffling and unsatisfactory affair for this "ingenious, worthy young man"; and in spite of all energetic attempts on his part at climbing the steep hill, he had found himself, when well on toward middle life, still floundering and discomfited at the bottom of it.

The son of a staymaker at Thetford in Norfolk, where he was born in 1737, he had been taken from school at the age of thirteen and had been put to his father's trade. At one time, soon after the beginning of the Seven Years' War, wearied perhaps by the monotony of his too unhazardous occupation as a maker of stays, he had enlisted on board an English privateer. Very soon exhausting the charm to be found in wielding the deadly cutlass, he had returned, though with evident reluctance, to the service of the innocuous needle, which he then for several years continued to ply for a livelihood at London, Dover, Sandwich, Margate, and perhaps elsewhere. When only twenty-two years

[1] Franklin, "Works," Sparks ed., viii. 137.

old he had married; and when only twenty-three, he had become a widower. In 1762, after due solicitation, he had received an appointment in the excise, being set in the first instance "to guage brewers' casks at Grantham," and afterward "to watch smugglers at Alford."[1] In 1765, he had been dismissed from the excise for neglect of duty; his offense being that of writing out his official entries at home, without the trouble of an actual tour of his district, and of course without an actual inspection of the excisable articles on which he had occasion to pass,[2]—a most comfortable way of making specific assertions, making them, it will be observed, on purely speculative or unverified data,—a method which might very likely stand this gentleman in good stead in later life when he should set up for a philosopher, but which could hardly be permitted to him so long as he was a mere exciseman. After the loss of his pittance from the government, he had returned once more to his trade, working for one Gudgeon, a staymaker at Diss; he had also for some time gained his daily bread as usher in an academy, first in Goodman's Fields, and then at Kensington; he had even earned an honest penny, at times, by ascending the pulpit in some chapel at Moorfields or elsewhere, and preaching the gospel to such saints and sinners as should have the grace to come and partake of his godly ministrations.[3] In 1768, after humble petition on his part, he had been restored to the excise and given an appointment at Lewes, in Sussex. In 1771, being still an exciseman, he had taken unto himself, as his second wife, a young lady with whom he was already in partnership as grocer and tobacconist. In 1774, he had been once more and forever

[1] M. D. Conway, "Life of Thomas Paine," i. 16. This chapter was written, after independent researches of my own, several years before the publication of Mr. Conway's book,—a book not exactly belonging to disinterested biography, and yet by far the most valuable contribution thus far made to our materials for a true understanding of Paine's career. In revising what I had written, I have been greatly assisted by these labors of an old friend.

[2] The minute of the board dismissing Paine is given in Conway, "Life," i. 17 n.

[3] Ibid. 18–20.

dismissed from the excise,—this time for the offense of "having quitted his business without obtaining the board's leave for so doing, and being gone off on account of the debts which he hath contracted."[1] Six days after this final dismissal from official service under the good king George the Third, Paine's household furniture, his stock in trade, and his other effects had been sold at auction at Lewes for the benefit of his creditors. Finally, two months later, he and his wife had subscribed their names to an amicable agreement for a separation,—an incident which seems to have been viewed by them both not as an additional misfortune to either, but rather as a mitigation of such misfortune as either or both may have already had in this troublous world.

It was in this doleful plight that Thomas Paine went up to London, and laid before Franklin such credentials as induced the latter, on the thirtieth of September, 1774, to give him an honorable passport to recognition and friendly help in America.

II.

Reaching Philadelphia late in the year 1774, Paine soon made his way to pleasant relations with some of the best people in that town. By the fourth of March, 1775, he was able to report to his illustrious benefactor in London, that he had already gained "many friends"; had received from "several gentlemen" offers of profitable employment as a tutor to their sons; and had begun to assist the bookseller, Robert Aitkin, in the conduct of a new magazine.[2]

Not by tutorship, however, nor by surveyorship, nor

[1] These words are from the order for his discharge, given entire in Conway, "Life," i. 29.

[2] Franklin, "Works," Sparks ed., viii. 138 n. The new magazine was "The Pennsylvania Magazine, or American Monthly Museum," begun in January, 1775. Paine probably had nothing in the first number; and whatever he wrote for subsequent numbers has to be ascertained chiefly on internal evidence, as his name is nowhere attached to any article, and in fact is nowhere mentioned, so far as I can discover, in the magazine at all. The reader should receive with some caution the positive statements of later writers as to Paine's authorship of this, that, or the other article, in "The Pa. Magazine."

even by editorship, but by authorship, was this man to achieve such success in America as then lay undreamed of before him; and very likely the peculiar and the marvelous aptitude he had in him for that particular function of authorship, was still hidden even from his own eyes,—which, however, were never greatly lacking in vision of his own talents and virtues. Though in his thirty-eighth year, he had up to that time written nothing notable in all his life, and had never "published a syllable."[1] We may picture him to ourselves, during his first year in Philadelphia —the year 1775—as an alert and eager stranger, gaining his livelihood chiefly by writing for Aitkin's magazine, haunting the bookshops, pushing his way to the acquaintance of leading citizens of the town, and after the assembling of Congress, on the tenth of May, pushing his way, likewise, to the acquaintance of leading citizens from all parts of the continent. Benjamin Rush describes him as at that time visiting familiarly "in the families of Dr. Franklin, Mr. Rittenhouse, and Mr. George Clymer, where he made himself acceptable by a turn he discovered for philosophical, as well as political, subjects."[2] John Adams, who was then in Philadelphia as a member of Congress, and who at that period was accustomed to speak of Paine in a

[1] This is Paine's own assertion. "Political Writings," i. 97. Did he forget his memorial on the "Case of the Officers of Excise," in 1772, of which he presented a copy to Goldsmith, with the explanation that four thousand copies had been printed? Goldsmith, "Works," i. 320–321. Did he also forget his ode on "The Death of General Wolfe," written in 1759, which was published in the "Gentleman's Magazine," and was also set to music and issued as a popular song? As this chapter was written several years before the publication of Conway's admirable edition of "The Complete Works of Thomas Paine," all my citations from Paine's Revolutionary writings are either from the original tracts or from a modern reprint of them in Paine's "Political Writings," 2 volumes, Boston, 1870. In the final revision of this chapter, I have of course made careful use of Conway's edition, with the view of obtaining the latest light that has been shed on the subject.

[2] Cheetham, "Life of Thomas Paine," 39. This book is quite worthless, so far as its contents are the work of Cheetham himself, whose name, in fact, if slightly altered in the spelling, would very accurately describe the man. I have never cited the book, except for some statement resting on other testimony than his.

respectful and even in a complimentary way, long afterward said sneeringly, that Paine "got into such company as would converse with him, and ran about picking up what information he could concerning our affairs." [1]

If, indeed, Paine so employed himself, it must be confessed that he was very well employed. He could hardly have done anything more to the point. Arriving in America in the midst of a great political revolution, and casting in his lot with a kindred people over whose political wrongs he was indignant, and with whose political aspirations he was in passionate sympathy, it is hard to see what worthier course he could have taken than to try to qualify himself for the best service he might render to the great cause by studying it in its origin, its history, its methods, its aims. And how could he better do this than by applying himself diligently to the very men who were the leaders in the great enterprise? On every hand, then, he gathered facts, opinions, impressions. He threw himself instantaneously into the American spirit; he became a naturalized American in body and soul; he caught at once the ideas that were in the air; with all his heart he responded to the immense, inarticulate impulse that was then moving a great people toward a great future. To the study, the acceptance, the advocacy of the American Revolution, Thomas Paine brought neither a wise, nor a profound, nor a cultivated mind,—not even an accurate or a temperate one; but he did bring a mind agile, alert, vivid, impressible, humane, quick to see into things and to grasp the gist of them, and marvelous in its power of stating them—stating them with lucidity, with sparkling liveliness, with rough, incisive, and captivating force.

III.

The moment of his arrival in America was one of supreme political excitement. The Congress of 1774 had but recently adjourned; and its measures for peaceful resistance to England through commercial non-intercourse had aroused the

[1] "Works," ii. 507.

most violent discussions throughout the colonies. Like the majority of Americans down to the nineteenth of April, 1775, Paine had at first believed in the possibility of a peaceful solution of the trouble, and had earnestly desired reconciliation between England and her colonies. What his political opinions were at the beginning of his American career, he himself explained with perfect candor some years later: "I happened to come to America a few months before the breaking out of hostilities. I found the disposition of the people such that they might have been led by a thread, and governed by a reed. Their suspicion was quick and penetrating, but their attachment to Britain was obstinate; and it was at that time a kind of treason to speak against it. They disliked the ministry, but they esteemed the nation. Their idea of grievance operated without resentment; and their single object was reconciliation. Bad as I believed the ministry to be, I never conceived them capable of a measure so rash and wicked as the commencing of hostilities; much less did I imagine the nation would encourage it. I viewed the dispute as a kind of law suit, in which, I supposed, the parties would find a way either to decide or settle it. I had no thoughts of Independence or of arms. The world could not then have persuaded me that I should be either a soldier or an author. If I had any talents for either, they were buried in me, and might ever have continued so, had not the necessity of the times dragged and driven them into action. I had formed my plan of life, and conceiving myself happy, wished everybody else so. But when the country into which I had just set my foot, was set on fire about my ears, it was time to stir. It was time for every man to stir. Those who had been long settled had something to defend; those who had just come had something to pursue; and the call and the concern was equal and universal. For in a country wherein all men were once adventurers, the difference of a few years in their arrival could make none in their right." [1]

[1] Paine, "Political Writings," i. 169–170.

Such, no doubt, is a true statement of Paine's opinions upon American Independence early in 1775. But, as the bitter events of that year rapidly unfolded themselves, not a few Americans became convinced that there was no true solution of the trouble except in that very Independence which they had but a short time before dreaded and denounced. Of such Americans, Thomas Paine was one; and towards the end of the year, through incessant study of passing events, and through incessant communication with the foremost minds in America, he had filled his own mind with the great decisive elements of the case, and was prepared to utter his thought thereon. Early in January, 1776, he did utter it, in the form of a pamphlet, published at Philadelphia, and entitled "Common Sense."[1]

IV.

Before entering upon a study of this epoch-making pamphlet,—the first open and unqualified argument in championship of the doctrine of American Independence,—it is important for us at least to glance at the previous history of American opinion on the subject. No one who searches the writings which have come down to us from that time, can have any doubt as to the truth of this broad statement that, for the first ten or twelve years of the Revolution, the entire Whig agitation was conducted on a perpetual disavowal of the purpose or the desire for Inde-

[1] In the title of his pamphlet, Paine seems not to have been original. Dr. Rush states that Paine intended to call it "Plain Truth," and that he adopted the title "Common Sense" at the suggestion of Rush himself. Cheetham, 37–38. Even Rush's title, however, had been anticipated; for, according to Thomas, "History of Printing," ii. 151 n., a political paper under the same title appeared in London in 1739. Furthermore, I have met with a pamphlet of 117 pages, published in London in the year just previous to the publication of Paine's "Common Sense," and also entitled "Common Sense: In Nine Conferences between a British Merchant and a Candid Merchant of America, in their Private Capacity as Friends." Oddly enough, "Common Sense" in 1775 viewed the questions in dispute from a side exactly opposite to that of "Common Sense" in 1776.

pendence. In every form in which a solemn affirmation could be made and reiterated, it was affirmed by the Whigs during all those years that the only object of their agitation was to obstruct and to defeat a bad ministerial policy, thereby to secure a redress of grievances; that, as for Independence, it was the thing they abhorred, and it was mere calumny to accuse them of designing or of desiring it. Nearly all the greatest Whig pamphleteers prior to 1776—James Otis, Daniel Dulany, John Dickinson, and Alexander Hamilton—abjured Independence as a measure full of calamity and crime. The Stamp Act Congress, speaking in the name of the several colonies, declared that their connection with Great Britain was their "great happiness and security," and that they "most ardently" desired its "perpetual continuance."[1] In January, 1768, the Massachusetts house of representatives sent to their agent a letter of instructions, written by James Otis, and thus defining their opposition to the renewal by parliament of its policy of taxing the colonies: "We cannot justly be suspected of the most distant thought of an Independency of Great Britain. Some, we know, have imagined this; . . . but it is so far from the truth that we apprehend the colonies would refuse it if offered to them, and would even deem it the greatest misfortune to be obliged to accept it."[2] In June, 1774, the same legislative body elected delegates to the first Continental Congress; and in their letter of instructions, signed by Samuel Adams, they declared that "the restoration of union and harmony between Great Britain and the colonists" was "most ardently desired by all good men."[3] The first Continental Congress, in its solemn petition to the king, adopted October 26, 1774, professed the most devoted loyalty: "We wish not a diminution of the prerogative. . . . Your royal authority over us and our connection with Great Britain we shall always care-

[1] "Prior Documents," 29, 31.

[2] Ibid. 167.

[3] "Journals of the Am. Cong.," i. 2.

fully and zealously endeavor to support and maintain."[1] In March, 1775, Benjamin Franklin, then in London, repeated the statement which he had made in the previous year to Lord Chatham, that he had never heard in America one word in favor of Independence "from any person, drunk or sober."[2] In May, 1775, shortly after American blood had been shed at Lexington and Concord, George Washington, crossing the Potomac on his way to the second Continental Congress, was met midway in the river by a boat containing his friend, Jonathan Boucher; and while their boats touched, Boucher kindly warned Washington that the errand on which he was going would lead to civil war and to an effort for Independence. Such apprehensions were vigorously scouted by Washington, who then added, as Boucher says, "that if ever I heard of his joining in any such measures, I had his leave to set him down for everything wicked."[3] Soon after Washington's arrival at Philadelphia, the Continental Congress resolved upon a dutiful petition to the king, assuring him that, although his ministry had forced hostilities upon them, yet they most ardently wished "for a restoration of the harmony formerly subsisting between" the mother country and the colonies.[4] The Americans who had just fought at Lexington and Concord, and the Americans who, a few weeks later, were to fight at Bunker Hill, would have spurned as a calumny the accusation that their object in fighting was Independence. Washington's appointment as commander-in-chief, which was made two days before the battle of Bunker Hill, contained no intimation that he was to lead the armies in a struggle for Independence. As soon as the news of his appointment reached Virginia, his old military company there sent him their congratulations on the honor he had received, closing their letter with the wish that all his "counsels and operations"

[1] "Journals of the Am. Cong.," i. 49.
[2] "The Complete Works of Benjamin Franklin," Bigelow ed., v. 446.
[3] "Notes and Queries," 5th ser., vi. 82–83.
[4] "Journals of the Am. Cong.," i. 73.

might be directed by Providence "to a happy and lasting union between us and Great Britain."[1] On the 6th of July, 1775, the Congress which had thus appointed Washington to lead their armies against the troops of the king, adopted their celebrated declaration, "setting forth the causes and necessity of their taking up arms," wherein they say: "Lest this declaration should disquiet the minds of our friends and fellow-subjects in any part of the empire, we assure them that we mean not to dissolve that union which has so long and so happily subsisted between us, and which we sincerely wish to see restored. . . . We have not raised armies with ambitious designs of separating from Great Britain, and establishing Independent States."[2] When, a few days later, that declaration was read to General Putnam's troops, parading on Prospect Hill, near Boston, they greeted, with three loud cries of "Amen," the passage in which the Almighty was implored to dispose their adversaries "to reconciliation on reasonable terms."[3] More than two months after the battle of Bunker Hill, Jefferson wrote to a kinsman of his that he was "looking with fondness towards a reconciliation with Great Britain."[4] More than three months after that battle, the committee of Chester county, Pennsylvania, with Anthony Wayne as their chairman, issued a statement denying that, in taking up arms, the people of that county intended "to overturn the constitution by declaring an Independency," and expressing their "abhorrence even of an idea so pernicious in its nature."[5] As late as the 22d of October, 1775, when Jeremy Belknap went to the American camp to officiate as chaplain, he publicly prayed for the king.[6] As late as December 25, 1775, the Revolutionary Congress of New Hampshire officially proclaimed their disavowal of any pur-

[1] "Writings of Washington," Sparks ed., iii. 5 n.

[2] "Journals of the Am. Cong.," i. 103.

[3] D. Humphreys, "Miscellaneous Works," 271.

[4] "The Writings of Thomas Jefferson," Ford ed., i. 482.

[5] "Am. Archives," 4th ser., iii. 794, 795.

[6] "Life of Belknap," by his granddaughter, 96, 97.

pose "aiming at Independence,"—a disavowal which they incorporated into the new constitution for New Hampshire adopted on the 5th of January, 1776.[1]

Such, then, upon the subject of Independence, was the attitude of all classes and parties in America during the first ten or twelve years of the Revolution. In just one sentiment all persons, Tories and Whigs, seemed perfectly to agree: namely, in abhorrence of the project of separation from the empire. Suddenly, however, and within a period of less than six months, the majority of the Whigs turned completely around, and openly declared for Independence, which, before that time, they had so vehemently repudiated. Among the facts necessary to enable us to account for this almost unrivaled political somersault, is that of the appearance in January, 1776, of the pamphlet entitled "Common Sense."

V.

This pamphlet was happily named: it undertook to apply common sense to a technical, complex, but most urgent and feverish, problem of constitutional law. In fact, on any other ground than that of common sense, the author of that pamphlet was incompetent to deal with the problem at all; since of law, of political science, and even of English and American history, he was ludicrously ignorant. But for the effective treatment of any question whatsoever that was capable of being dealt with under the light of the broad and rugged intellectual instincts of mankind,—man's natural sense of truth, of congruity, of fair-play,—perhaps no other man in America, excepting Franklin, was a match for this ill-taught, heady, and slashing English stranger.

From the tribunal of technical law, therefore, he carried the case to the tribunal of common sense; and in his plea before that tribunal, he never for a moment missed his point, or forgot his method. The one thing just then to

[1] "The Federal and State Constitutions," Poore ed., ii. 1279.

be done was to convince the average American colonist of the period that it would be ridiculous for him any longer to remain an American colonist; that the time had come for him to be an American citizen; that nothing stood in the way of his being so, but the trash of a few pedants respecting the authority of certain bedizened animals called kings; and that whether he would or no, the alternative was at last thrust into his face upon the point of a bayonet,—either to declare for national Independence, and a wide-spaced and resplendent national destiny, or to accept, along with subservience to England, the bitterness and the infamy of national annihilation.

The pamphlet begins with a rattling overture of pungent but crude affirmations concerning government in general, and concerning the English government in particular, all intended to rid the minds of its readers of any undue reverence for organized authority, especially for monarchical authority, and to convince a people with whom obedience to law had long been a second nature, that the hour had struck for them to legalize disobedience to law. Government has been often described as if it were identical with society; whereas government and society "are not only different, but have different origins. Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness. . . . Society in every state is a blessing; but government, even in its best estate, is but a necessary evil; in its worst estate, an intolerable one. . . . Government, like dress, is the badge of lost innocence; the palaces of kings are built upon the ruins of the bowers of paradise."[1] Government, in fact, is "a mode rendered necessary by the inability of moral virtue to govern the world." Such, according to Thomas Paine, is the origin of government; and as to its object, he declares it to be twofold—"freedom and security."[2] And what is the true form of government? Whatever else it may be, surely it is not monarchy. That form of government which rests on "the distinction of men into

[1] "Political Writings," i. 19.

[2] Ibid. 21.

kings and subjects," is one for which no "natural or religious reason can be assigned." "Male and female are the distinctions of nature; good and bad, the distinctions of heaven; but how a race of men came into the world so exalted above the rest, and distinguished like some new species, is worth enquiring into, and whether they are the means of happiness or of misery to mankind."[1] "The nearer any government approaches to a republic, the less business there is for a king. . . . In England a king hath little more to do than to make war, and give away places; which, in plain terms, is to impoverish the nation, and set it together by the ears. A pretty business, indeed, for a man to be allowed eight hundred thousand sterling for, and worshiped into the bargain! Of more worth is one honest man to society, and in the sight of God, than all the crowned ruffians that ever lived."[2]

Having thus dispatched, in a series of incisive and contemptuous propositions, the doctrine of king-craft as an intolerable method of governing mankind,—supporting his opinions by elaborate and reverent quotations from the Bible,—he soon reaches the specific business he has in hand, namely, the state of affairs in America. Here, at last, he is on the ground of tangible facts and of their natural interpretation; and here the vigor of his mind, his shrewdness of insight, his unhesitating confidence, the filmless lucidity of his style, his humor, his asperity, his epigrammatic gift, have victorious play, and give to his pages the most stimulating flavor. "The period of debate is closed. Arms, as the last resource, must decide the contest. . . . By referring the matter from argument to arms, a new era for politics is struck; a new method of thinking hath arisen. All plans, proposals, and so forth, prior to the nineteenth of April . . . are like the almanacs of last year."[3]

Since the nineteenth of April, then, all talk of filial affection for England has become archaic, pointless, farcical; and for the American who, unaware of the change that has

[1] "Political Writings," i. 24–25. [2] Ibid. 32. [3] Ibid. 33–34.

come upon the earth, still pleads that England is our mother, there is but one reply: "Then the more shame upon her conduct! Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war upon their families."[1]

To the objection that "as America has flourished under her former connection with Great Britain, the same connection is necessary towards her future happiness, and will always have the same effect," Paine is ready with a telling retort: "Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument. We may as well assert that because a child has thrived upon milk, it is never to have meat; or that the first twenty years of our lives is to become a precedent for the next twenty. But even this is admitting more than is true; for I answer roundly that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power had anything to do with her. The articles of commerce by which she has enriched herself, are the necessaries of life; and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe."[2]

VI.

Moreover, the connection of America with England brings, according to Paine, not a solitary advantage to America; nay, it brings to her disadvantages and injuries without number. The greatest of all is this: our connection with England "tends directly to involve this continent in European wars and quarrels, and sets us at variance with nations who would otherwise seek our friendship, and against whom we have neither anger nor complaint. As Europe is our market for trade, we ought to form no partial connection with any part of it. It is the true interest of America to steer clear of European contentions, which she never can do while, by her dependence on Britain, she is made the make-weight in the scale of British politics."[3]

Then, again, "it is repugnant to reason and the universal

[1] "Political Writings," i. 35. [2] Ibid. 34. [3] Ibid. 37.

order of things, to all examples from former ages, to suppose that this continent can longer remain subject to any external power." [1] There is something preposterous in the mere idea of a great nation on this side of the Atlantic remaining in a state of permanent pupilage to a great nation on the other side of the Atlantic: "A greater absurdity cannot be conceived of, than three millions of people running to their seacoast every time a ship arrives from London, to know what portion of liberty they should enjoy." [2]

Furthermore, there is an obvious cosmographical argument for American Independence. A glance at the map will show that the subordination of America to England inverts the order of nature: "Small islands, not capable of protecting themselves, are the proper objects for kingdoms to take under their care; but there is something absurd in supposing a continent to be perpetually governed by an island. In no instance hath nature made the satellite larger than its primary planet; and as England and America, with respect to each other, reverse [3] the common order of nature, it is evident that they belong to different systems: England to Europe, America to—itself!"

Aside from mere analogies, however, and looking directly at the welfare of America in the transaction of its own affairs, it is plain that Independence is a necessity: "As to government matters, it is not in the power of Britain to do this continent justice. The business of it will soon be too weighty and intricate to be managed with any tolerable degree of convenience, by a power so distant from us, and so very ignorant of us. . . . To be always running three or four thousand miles with a tale or a petition, waiting four or five months for an answer, which, when obtained, requires five or six more to explain it in, will in a few years

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[1] "Political Writings," i. 39.

[2] According to Rush, this brilliant sentence, which does not appear in the pamphlet as printed, was in the original copy, but was stricken out apparently at the suggestion of Franklin. Cheetham, 37.

[3] The text has "reverses." "Political Writings," i. 40.

be looked upon as folly and childishness. There was a time when it was proper, and there is a proper time for it to cease." [1]

But if it be supposed for a moment that reconciliation were actually brought about between England and America, what would be the result? The ruin of America. Why? First, because England would still be the governing power. And "is the power who is jealous of our prosperity, a proper power to govern us? . . . America is only a secondary object in the system of British politics. England consults the good of this country no further than it answers her own purpose. Wherefore, her own interest leads her to suppress the growth of ours, in every case which doth not promote her advantage, or in the least interferes with it." Secondly, because "even the best terms which we can expect to obtain can amount to no more than a temporary expedient, or a kind of government by guardianship, which can last no longer than till the colonies come of age." Thirdly, because "nothing but Independence . . . can keep the peace of the continent, and preserve it inviolate from civil wars." [2]

But there are Americans who fear that if we separate ourselves from the control of the king of England, we shall lapse into anarchy. "Where, say some, is the king of America? I 'll tell you, friend. He reigns above, and doth not make havoc of mankind, like the royal brute of Britain. . . . A government of our own is our natural right; and when a man seriously reflects on the precariousness of human affairs, he will become convinced that it is infinitely wiser and safer to form a constitution of our own, in a cool, deliberate manner, while we have it in our power, than to trust such an interesting event to time and chance." "Ye who oppose Independence now, ye know not what ye do: ye are opening a door to eternal tyranny, by keeping vacant the seat of government. . . . To talk of friend-

[1] "Political Writings," i. 40.

[2] Ibid. i. 41, 42, 43.

ship with those in whom our reason forbids us to have faith, and our affections, wounded through a thousand pores, instruct us to detest, is madness and folly. Every day wears out the little remains of kindred between us and them; and can there be any reason to hope that as the relationship expires, the affection will increase, or that we shall agree better, when we have ten times more and greater concerns to quarrel over than ever? Ye that tell us of harmony and reconciliation, can ye restore to us the time that is past? . . . The last cord now is broken. . . . There are injuries which nature cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature if she did. . . . O ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose, not only tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her. Europe regards her like a stranger; and England hath given her warning to depart. O! receive the fugitive; and prepare in time an asylum for mankind." [1]

VII.

With all its crudities of thought, its superficiality, and its rashness of assertion, "Common Sense" is a masterly pamphlet; for in the elements of its strength it was precisely fitted to the hour, to the spot, and to the passions of men. Even its smattering of historical lore, and its cheap display of statistics, and its clumsy attempts at some sort of political philosophy, did not diminish the homage with which it was read by the mass of the community, who were even less learned and less philosophical than Paine, and who, at any rate, cared much more just then for their imperiled rights, than they did either for philosophy or for learning.

The power of the pamphlet lay in the fitness of its method, its tone, its scope. It brushes away the tangles and cobwebs of technical debate, and flashes common sense

[1] "Political Writings," i. 46, 47.

upon the situation. It was meant for plain men, in desperate danger, and desperately in earnest. Its thought is homely, always blunt, occasionally humorous, rugged, palpable, overpowering; with just enough of generous and contemptuous passion,—love of freedom, hate of tyranny, and a consciousness of the latent, illimitable strength of its own cause. Its style never errs on the side of restraint; is never debilitated by any delicacy of feeling. Thomas Paine did not take up his pen in the service of the amenities. Here is no urbane concession to the foe. Here are the germs of that untempered invective which sometimes grew, at a later period of his life, into literary truculence and barbarism.

The immediate practical effects of this pamphlet in America, and the celebrity which it soon acquired in Europe as well as in America, are a significant part of its history as a potential literary document of the period. In every impassioned popular discussion there is likely to spring up a leader, who with pen or voice strikes in, at just the right moment, with just the right word, so skillfully, so powerfully, that thenceforward the intellectual battle seems to be raging and surging around him and around the fiery word which he has sent shrilling through the air. So far as the popular discussion of American Independence is concerned, precisely this was the case, between January and July, 1776, with Thomas Paine and his pamphlet "Common Sense."

It was originally published at Philadelphia on the ninth[1] of January, 1776, without the author's name. On the twentieth of that month, a second edition, with "large additions," was published by the same booksellers. On the twenty-fifth, another edition was announced by a firm of rival booksellers in Philadelphia, who state that "several hundred are already bespoke, one thousand for Virginia,"

[1] The date of publication often given is 10 January, 1776, on the authority of an advertisement in "The Pennsylvania Journal." Thus, Conway, "Life," i. 61. But in "The Pennsylvania Evening Post," for 9 January, 1776, there is an advertisement to the effect that the pamphlet was already out that day.

and that the work was also about to be published in German. The edition thus announced made its appearance on the twentieth of February, being a pamphlet of fifty pages, and containing "large and interesting additions by the author." In the enormous tide of popular interest which soon bore the pamphlet into every port and inlet of American society, were speedily drowned the competitions of the two local booksellers who had begun by trying to monopolize the profits to be got from this brain-freighted and strong-winged commodity. In New York, Norwich, Providence, Newport, Salem, Newburyport, Charlestown, Boston, and elsewhere in America, it was soon reprinted, as well as in London, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Edinburgh, Rotterdam, and Paris. Within three months from the date of its first issue, at least one hundred and twenty thousand copies of it were sold in America alone. By that time, the pamphlet seemed to be in every one's hand and the theme of every one's talk.

In a very early edition, it was described on its title-page as "Written by an Englishman." In later issues this description was soon omitted; and in the enlarged edition of the twentieth of February, some reference was made to the public curiosity to know the authorship of the treatise: "Who the author of this production is, is wholly unnecessary to the public, as the object of attention is the doctrine, not the man. . . . He is unconnected with any party, and under no sort of influence, public or private, but the influence of reason and principle."

Of all writers then known to the American people, probably only three were much thought of at the time as likely to have produced this pamphlet. "'Common Sense,' when it first appeared," wrote John Adams long afterward, with characteristic aplomb, "was generally by the public ascribed to me or to Mr. Samuel Adams."[1] Indeed, in some parts of Europe, particularly in France, the first rumor that it was written by a great American

[1] "Works," ii. 507.

congressman vaguely named "Adams," seems to have remained in force for several years afterward; and in 1779, when John Adams himself arrived in France as a commissioner of Congress, he found himself welcomed as "le fameux Adams," the reputed author of "Common Sense," —a pamphlet which, as he then wrote, "was received in France and in all Europe with rapture."[1] In America, probably, the prevailing tendency was to ascribe it to Benjamin Franklin, who, indeed, on one occasion is said to have been expostulated with by a Loyalist lady of his acquaintance, for having in that pamphlet been so discourteous as to speak of their good king as "the royal brute of Britain." "Madam," replied Franklin, "let me assure you that I did not write 'Common Sense.' Moreover, if I had written it, I would not so have dishonored—the brute creation." In England, where Franklin was then better known than any other American, and where he had received personal affronts which would account, it was supposed, for any asperities of style, the pamphlet was for some time commonly spoken of as his,—as in the case, for example, of an amusing story told in London in the summer of 1776, to the effect that the Prince of Wales had been discovered one day by his mother in the very act of reading, within the awful precincts of the palace, "Dr. Franklin's pamphlet 'Common Sense,'" and in response to the queen's searching questions, had refused to confess how he had come by the atrocious document.[2]

VIII.

Of all the contemporary testimonies to the immediate power of "Common Sense," one of the earliest is that of General Charles Lee, who, on the twenty-fourth of January, 1776,—fifteen days after the first issue of the pamphlet,—thus wrote to Washington: "Have you seen the pamphlet

[1] "Works," iii. 189.

[2] "The Pa. Evening Post," for 1 January, 1777, where the story is given as from London, 30 August, 1776.

'Common Sense'? I never saw such a masterly, irresistible performance. It will, if I mistake not, in concurrence with the transcendent folly and wickedness of the ministry, give the 'coup-de-grace' to Great Britain. In short, I own myself convinced by the arguments, of the necessity of separation."[1] On the thirty-first of January, one day after Washington had received Lee's letter, he thus wrote to Joseph Reed: "A few more of such flaming arguments as were exhibited at Falmouth and Norfolk, added to the sound doctrine and unanswerable reasoning contained in the pamphlet 'Common Sense,' will not leave numbers at a loss to decide upon the propriety of separation."[2] A few days later, on the sixth of February, in an article which was published in "The Pennsylvania Evening Post," a person in Maryland writes: "If you know the author of 'Common Sense,' tell him he has done wonders and worked miracles, —made Tories Whigs, and washed blackamores white."[3] From South Carolina, on the fourteenth of February, rises this cry of delight: "Who is the author of 'Common Sense'? I can scarce refrain from adoring him. He deserves a statue of gold."[4] On the twenty-fourth of February, a newspaper published in New York thus joins in the rising chorus of enthusiastic praise: "The pamphlet entitled 'Common Sense' is indeed a wonderful production. It is completely calculated for the meridian of North America. . . . This animated piece dispels, with irresistible energy, the prejudices of the mind against the doctrine of Independence, and pours in upon it such an inundation of light and truth, as will produce an instantaneous and marvelous change in the temper, in the views and feelings, of an American. The ineffable delight with which it is perused, and its doctrines imbibed, is a demonstration that the seeds of Independence, though imported with the troops from Britain, will grow surprisingly with proper cultivation in

[1] Sparks, "Corr. of the Am. Rev.," i. 136.

[2] Washington, "Writings," Sparks ed., iii. 276.

[3] Reprinted in Frothingham, "Rise of the Republic," 480 n.

[4] Ibid.

the fields of America." [1] On the second of March, Mistress John Adams writes from Quincy to her husband in Philadelphia: "I am charmed with the sentiments of 'Common Sense,' and wonder how an honest heart . . . can hesitate one moment at adopting them." [2] On the twelfth of March, a letter from Philadelphia says: "'Common Sense' . . . is read to all ranks; and as many as read, so many become converted, though perhaps the hour before [they] were most violent against the least idea of Independence." [3] A letter from Georgetown, South Carolina, on the seventeenth of March, says: "'Common Sense' hath made Independents of the majority of the country." [4] On the first of April, Washington, writing from Cambridge, thus speaks of the development of political thought among the people of Virginia: "My countrymen, I know, from their form of government and steady attachment heretofore to royalty, will come reluctantly into the idea of Independence, but time and persecution bring many wonderful things to pass; and by private letters which I have lately received from Virginia, I find 'Common Sense' is working a powerful change there in the minds of men." [5] On the eighth of April, "The New York Gazette" says: "The subject of conversation throughout America for these few weeks past, hath been excited by a pamphlet called 'Common Sense.'" [6] On the twelfth of April, a news-writer in New York says: "A pamphlet entitled 'Common Sense' has converted thousands to Independence, that could not endure the idea before." [7] On the twenty-ninth of April, "The Boston Gazette" says: "Had the spirit of prophecy directed the birth of a publication, it could not have fallen

[1] From the "Constitutional Gazette," reprinted in Moore, "Diary of the Am. Rev.," i. 208–209.

[2] "Letters of Mrs. Adams," i. 89.

[3] Almon, "Remembrancer" for 1776, part ii. 31.

[4] "Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc.," 1869–1870, 254.

[5] Washington, "Writings," Sparks ed., iii. 347.

[6] Quoted in Frothingham, "Rise of the Republic," 480 n.

[7] Almon, "Remembrancer" for 1776, part iii. 87.

upon a more fortunate period than the time in which 'Common Sense' made its appearance. The minds of men are now swallowed up in attention to an object the most momentous and important that ever yet employed the deliberations of a people."[1] Finally, on the seventh of June,—the very day on which Richard Henry Lee introduced into Congress his resolutions for Independence,—William Gordon, the historian of the Revolution, sets down these words respecting the influences that had prepared the public mind for the introduction of such resolutions: "The constant publications which have appeared and been read with attention, have greatly promoted the spirit of Independency; but no one so much as the pamphlet under the signature of 'Common Sense,' written by Mr. Thomas Paine, an Englishman. . . . Nothing could have been better timed than this performance. In unison with the sentiments and feelings of the people, it has produced most astonishing effects, and been received with vast applause, read by almost every American, and recommended as a work replete with truth, and against which none but the partial and prejudiced can form any objections. It has satisfied multitudes that it is their true interest immediately to cut the Gordian knot by which the American colonies have been bound to Great Britain, and to open their commerce, as an independent people, to all the nations of the world. It has been greatly instrumental in producing a similarity of sentiment through the continent, upon the subject under the consideration of Congress."[2]

[1] Quoted in Frothingham, "Rise of the Republic," 480 n.

[2] "Am. Rev.," ii. 92.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE POPULAR DEBATE OVER THE PROPOSAL OF INDEPENDENCE: JANUARY – JUNE, 1776.

I.—The proposal of Independence was the proposal of a political heresy and a crime—American Independence was American secession—Impossible for the Whigs to forget their repeated denials of any purpose or desire for Independence.

II.—Two classes of Americans opposed to Independence, the Loyalists and many Whigs who had approved even of armed opposition but drew back from national disruption—The side of the Loyalists less ably presented in this discussion than in previous controversies—"Plain Truth"—"The True Interest of America Impartially Stated."

III.—The ablest opposition to Independence came from American Whigs—Substance of their appeal to their old associates against a measure so inconsistent.

IV.—John Joachim Zubly, of Georgia, a champion of armed resistance who spurned the proposal of secession from the empire—His career and writings—The exact nature of the offense for which he was loaded with reproach.

V.—Philadelphia as the focus of the popular debate over Independence—The doctrine denounced in the "Letters of Cato" by Provost William Smith—The temper of the discussion playfully exhibited in "A Prophecy" by Francis Hopkinson.

VI.—Extraordinary influence of the advocacy of Independence by William Henry Drayton, of South Carolina—His character as a political thinker and essayist—His writings—As chief justice of South Carolina, in April, 1776, he declares the government of that colony abdicated by the king, and all obedience to him there no longer due.

I.

In tracing the history of public opinion in America as to the doctrine of American Independence, it has been convenient for us in the first place to follow by itself the story of the astonishing effects wrought by the pamphlet "Common Sense," which, having been sent forth at the very

moment when the minds of the people were fully ripe for it, precipitated the popular debate upon that question. We should, however, be in danger of missing the true perspective of events, if we failed to observe some other prominent participants in this debate, particularly those who were frankly and strenuously opposed to the new doctrine.

American Independence is a fact now so long established among us, so glorious to our imaginations, so hallowed in our faith and love, that it cannot be easy for us to realize the intellectual and spiritual conditions of a time when the doctrine of American Independence was among our own ancestors a startling novelty, a dangerous political heresy, the suggestion of an appalling crime—the very crime of treason. Nevertheless, we must realize all this, if we would now appreciate, on the one hand, the sincerity of disapproval and the horror with which vast numbers of patriotic Americans then contended against a proposal so audacious, or, on the other hand, the faith in ideas, the courage, the capacity for self-sacrifice, required by those Americans who then at last rallied to the support of a proposal so perilous.

Especially do we need, by a strong effort, to view the proposal as standing in the very light, and against the very background, which the men and women of 1776 were conscious of, when they first took it into their consideration. They were then members of a great empire of which they had always been proud, to the constitutional authority of which they had always been loyal. Upon the integrity of that empire, the new proposal was a direct and a terrific assault: upon their own loyalty to the constitutional obligations incurred by membership of that empire, the new proposal offered a violent shock. Of course, no one then pretended that separation could be resorted to, except as a revolutionary measure required by some vast and commanding need in the existing circumstances of the American colonies. If, accordingly, we would now see the subject as it was seen by them, and would understand how easy it was

for one portion of the American people to oppose the plan for separation from the empire, and how hard it was for the rest of them to favor it, we must translate their word Independence into its modern American equivalent. For, just as the earlier Whig doctrine for the rejection of the taxing-power of the general government meant what in the nineteenth century we have known under the name of Nullification, so the later Whig doctrine of separation from the empire meant precisely what we now mean by the word Secession. Under this aspect, the American Revolution had just two stages: from about 1764 to 1776, its champions were Nullifiers, without being Secessionists; from 1776 to 1783 they were also Secessionists, and, as the event proved, successful Secessionists. The word Independence was merely a euphemism for national disunion, for a disruption of the British empire. What the Whig leaders resolved to do, under the name of Independence, about the middle of the year 1776, seemed to many Americans of that time precisely the same political crime as, to the people of the Northern States, seemed the measure undertaken by certain Southern leaders, in the latter part of 1860, under the name of Secession. In short, the Loyalists of the American Revolution took, between 1776 and 1783, constitutional ground similar to that taken by the people of these Northern States and by the so-called Loyalists of the Southern States between 1861 and 1865; that is, they were champions of national unity, as resting on the paramount authority of the general government.

The proposal of American Independence had, therefore, for all Americans in 1776, the background of this fact: it was in reality, a revolutionary and treasonable proposal, which might or might not be justifiable; which, if practically asserted, would involve us in almost incalculable risks and sufferings; which, even if successfully asserted, might prove anything but a blessing to us, and if unsuccessfully asserted, would certainly prove a curse.

Finally, when early in 1776, the American Whigs began

openly to discuss the doctrine of Independence, they did not and they could not dismiss from their minds the fact that, ever since they had begun to agitate for the exclusive right of laying taxes in America, they had been accused, both in America and in England, of masking under that demand the secret purpose of Independence,—an accusation which they had always repelled as both a falsehood and a calumny.

II.

Of course, for several months before the appearance of the pamphlet "Common Sense," and particularly in consequence of the shedding of American blood by royalist troops at Lexington and Concord, many Americans had come to the conclusion that, sooner or later, separation from Great Britain was inevitable; but, excepting in satire or in an occasional irresponsible paragraph in some newspaper, no downright avowal of the doctrine had been made until it was made in that pamphlet. Of the persons who then rose up against the new doctrine, may now be recognized two classes: first, the old American Loyalists, who had always objected to extreme measures even in opposition to a bad ministerial policy; and, secondly, many of the old American Whigs, who, while they had always approved of such opposition even when carried to the point of armed resistance, yet drew back from it when carried to the point of treason and of national disruption.

In the heated popular debate which arose over the new proposal, the reader cannot fail to see that the side of the Loyalists was now sustained with far less force of argument, with far less wit or literary cleverness than had been the case in the controversies of the two previous years. This diminution in the debating ability of the Loyalists may be explained partly by the fact that their greatest writers had then been driven out of the country or driven into silence; partly, by the fact that most of those who were left in position to

write, realized the uselessness of further discussion,—the Revolutionary movement having at last acquired an impetus not to be checked by mere words, however logical, or eloquent, or witty.

Two pamphlets, evidently the work of steady Loyalists, may be selected by us as examples of the work capable of being done by their available writers in that final crisis of the controversy. Of these pamphlets, the one which has acquired the greater distinction but which deserves it the less, is "Plain Truth, Addressed to the Inhabitants of America, containing Remarks on a late Pamphlet entitled Common Sense: Wherein are shewn, that the scheme of Independence is ruinous, delusive, and impracticable, that were the author's asseverations respecting the power of America as real as nugatory, Reconciliation on liberal principles with Great Britain would be exalted Policy; and that, circumstanced as we are, permanent Liberty and true Happiness can only be obtained by Reconciliation with that Kingdom. Written by Candidus." The purpose of this pamphlet is well enough set forth in the copious announcement which thus confronts us upon the title-page; but a still more copious announcement would be necessary in order to set forth the intellectual poverty of its actual contents,—its lack of order, its feebleness in argument, its garrulity, its dismal attempts at humor, its bad grammar, its pitiful failure to perform what it announces as its purpose to perform.[1]

[1] "Plain Truth" was very caustically and justly disposed of, soon after its publication, in an essay signed "Aristides," which is one of the pseudonyms of President Witherspoon. "Works," ix. 89-92. A new and an undeserved prominence has been given to the pamphlet by attempts made within the past twenty years to ascertain who was its author. Thus, the distressing compliment has been handed round by various scholars to Joseph Galloway, to Charles Inglis, to George Chalmers, to Provost William Smith; even as, in the last century, it was offered to William Wells, and, with immeasurable absurdity, even to Alexander Hamilton. The subject is really not worth the room it would take for a discussion of these various suggestions, the most of which, indeed, have fallen dead without anybody's help. From evidence both of substance and of form, I am confident that not one of these guesses as to the authorship of

It must be admitted that the incompetence of the first of these Loyalist pamphlets against American separation from the empire, is more than offset by the ability of the second of them: "The True Interest of America Impartially Stated, in Certain Strictures on a pamphlet intitled Common Sense. By an American."[1] The writer, whose signature as "an American" is thus placed in contrast to that of "an Englishman" on some of the earlier copies of "Common Sense," was undoubtedly Charles Inglis, then assistant rector of Trinity Church, New York, and from 1787 to his death in 1816 the bishop of Nova Scotia.[2]

As to "Common Sense," he regards it as "one of the most artful, insidious, and pernicious pamphlets" he had ever met with. In fact, he finds "no common sense" in it, "but much uncommon phrensy. It is an outrageous insult on the common sense of Americans. . . . The principles of government laid down in it, are not only false, but too absurd to have ever entered the head of a crazy politician before. Even Hobbes would blush to own the author for a disciple."[3] Dividing his little book into sections corresponding to the leading topics of Paine's pamphlet, he endeavors, tersely and sharply, to expose the falsity and shallowness of Paine's statements, whether of fact or of principle; he expresses perfect sympathy with his countrymen in their anxiety for a clearer definition and a stronger protection of their political rights within the empire; and in

"Plain Truth" is the true one; and in short, that the man who wrote it, and who, doubtless, had misfortune enough in being the member of a party so routed and discredited, has had at least this felicity—he has thus far escaped detection as the author of so much stupidity and broken syntax as are to be found in that pamphlet.

[1] The first edition of this pamphlet, published in New York early in the spring of 1776, is said to have been seized and burned by the Sons of Liberty there; but soon afterward a second and a third edition of it were printed in Philadelphia. I am using a copy of this second edition.

[2] A good sketch of Inglis is given in Sprague, "Annals," v. 186–191. Many references to him occur in "The History of the American Episcopal Church," edited by W. S. Perry.

[3] "The True Interest," etc., Preface, v.–vi.

a thoroughly manly tone, with great aptness and with great force, he tries to prove to them that all their interests are to be best served by rejecting this wicked and pestilent doctrine of Independence.

Perhaps in no other part of his argument does he show greater cleverness than in that where he deals with Paine's contention that the necessary effect of the 19th of April, 1775, was to exclude all further thought of reconciliation. "That the expedition to Lexington," says Inglis, "was rash and ill-judged—that it was risking the peace of the continent, and wantonly involving fellow-subjects in blood, for a most inconsiderable object—I shall most readily allow; and our author has my leave to load that expedition with all the reproaches he can invent. I disapprove the design of it as much as he—I lament its effects much more."[1] But, "on the very best authority," the writer adds, he is able to prove that it was opposed both to the letter and to the spirit of the king's orders to General Gage. If, then, the author of "Common Sense" can say that "no man was a warmer wisher for reconciliation than himself before the fatal 19th of April 1775," how is the case justly changed by that event? "If peace and reconciliation on constitutional grounds, and proper security for our several rights, were desirable and advantageous before the 19th of April, 1775, must they not have been equally so after the event of that unfortunate day? Let reason and common sense answer."[2]

III.

Incomparably the strongest words then uttered against the new proposal of Independence, were uttered, not by American Tories but by some of the American Whigs, who, while they had been in full accord with the rough methods of opposition thus far pursued by their party, were shocked by this project for committing them to a doctrine which from

[1] "The True Interest," etc., 37.

[2] Ibid. 37-38.

the first they had all rejected and condemned. These were the Whigs, till that time, held in highest honor in their party, who now made solemn appeal to their old associates against a measure so repugnant to all their professions as public men and as loyal subjects. "It cannot be," said they, in substance, to their former political comrades, "that you are thus entering upon this long repudiated measure for Independence, because you really think that the objects for which we began the agitation and have thus far conducted it, cannot be obtained within the empire. All our demands are on the point of being granted. Our great friends in parliament—Chatham, Camden, Burke, Conway, Barré, and the rest—continually send us word that complete success is in sight; that if we will but hold on to our plan of agitation for larger rights inside the empire, retaining our allegiance, they can help us; that if we run up the flag of separation, of Independence, we shall at once discredit them, and destroy all their power to be of any further use to us; that these political demands of ours have thus far been made by us after the method of our English ancestors, who, in cases of need, have roughly acquired an increase of political privilege, doing this as loyal subjects with weapons in their hands, and even enrolled as troops, never in the spirit of treason, never for the rejection of allegiance, never for the dissolution of national unity; that, even now, Lord North is quite ready to grant all our terms; that though the king still holds out against any concession, even he will have to yield to the people and to parliament; that commissioners will soon be on their way hither to negotiate with us, and to concede to us that measure of local self-government which we have hitherto proclaimed as our sole object in the controversy; that by persisting a little longer in the line of action upon which we have hitherto conducted the whole movement, we shall certainly win for ourselves every political advantage we have ever professed to desire, and shall become a group of great, free, self-governing colonies within the British empire. But as separation from the empire is not called for by any

requirement of political safety, so our present resort to it would show either that we are fickle in opinion, or that we are political hypocrites—as our enemies have always charged us with being—and that, under all our disavowals of the purpose or the wish for Independence, we have been treacherously working with that very object all the time in view."

Of the American Whigs who took this stand against the project for Independence, were also two groups,—the one consisting of those who, like Zubly, a member of the Continental Congress from Georgia, never afterward yielded up their opinion on the subject; the other consisting of those who, like John Dickinson, Robert Morris, James Wilson, and William Smith, finally and reluctantly succumbed to the measure, and, in some cases, put forth great efforts and made great sacrifices in its support.

IV.

The case of John Joachim Zubly may help us to understand the attitude of the first group of Whig opponents of American Independence. Born in Switzerland in 1725, and at an early age settled as a clergyman in South Carolina and Georgia, he put at the service of the Revolution in its primary stage, his practical wisdom, his great local influence, and his uncommon ability as a writer. In 1769, under the name of "A Freeholder of South Carolina," he published a strong and temperate pamphlet entitled "An Humble Enquiry into the Nature of the Dependency of the American Colonies upon the Parliament of Great Britain and the Right of Parliament to lay Taxes on the Said Colonies." A still more striking statement of the virile claim of the American colonies was made by him in 1775, in an address to the Earl of Dartmouth, prefixed to a sermon on "The Law of Liberty,"—a sermon which he had preached at the opening of the provincial congress of Georgia. In this address, he rings the changes on that fatal phrase which had been used by parliament when it asserted its right to "bind

the colonies in all cases whatsoever." "My lord, the Americans look upon this as the language of despotism in its utmost perfection. What can . . . an emperor of Morocco pretend more of his slaves, than to bind them in all cases whatsoever."[1] "My lord, the Americans are no idiots, and they appear determined not to be slaves. Oppression will make wise men mad; but oppressors, in the end, frequently find that they were not wise men. There may be resources even in despair, sufficient to render any set of men strong enough not to be bound 'in all cases whatsoever.'"[2] "The bulk of the inhabitants of a continent extending eighteen hundred miles in front of the Atlantic, and permitting an extension in breadth as far as the South Sea, look upon the claim 'to bind them in all cases whatsoever,' as unjust, illegal, and detestable. Let us suppose for a moment, that they are grossly mistaken; yet an error imbibed by millions, and in which they believe the all of the present and future generations lies at stake, may prove a very dangerous error. Destroying the Americans, will not cure them; nor will any acts that condemn them to starve or be miserable, have any tendency to persuade them that these acts were made by their friends."[3] "My lord, the violence of the present measures has almost instantaneously created a continental union, a continental currency, a continental army; and before this can reach your lordship, they will be as equal in discipline, as they are superior in cause and spirit, to any regulars. The most zealous Americans could not have effected in an age, what the cruelty and violence of administration has effectually brought to pass in a day."[4] "In this respect, as well as in the strong sense of liberty, and in the use of firearms almost from the cradle, the Americans have vastly the advantage over men of their rank almost everywhere else. From the constant topic of present conversation, every child unborn will be impressed with the notion—it is slavery

[1] "The Law of Liberty," etc., vi. [2] Ibid. vi.–vii.
[3] Ibid. ix.–x. [4] Ibid. xiii.–xiv.

to be bound at the will of another 'in all cases whatsoever.' Every mother's milk will convey a detestation of this maxim. Were your lordship in America, you might see little ones acquainted with the word of command before they can distinctly speak, and shouldering the resemblance of a gun before they are well able to walk."[1]

Such was the essence of Zubly's doctrine touching Revolutionary politics. Such, also, was its limitation. In his opinion, the colonial policy of the British parliament constituted a set of grievances not to be borne by free men—grievances to be thrown off by all means, even by a resort to war—grievances to be thrown off by all means this side of separation from the empire. That those grievances could thus be thrown off, he doubted not. That separation from the empire had become necessary for that purpose, or was likely ever to become so, he did not believe. And this opinion, which he held from the beginning, he held to the end. In June, 1766, on the repeal of the Stamp Act, he had said in a sermon at Savannah, with reference to any man who would divide British America from Britain—"let him be accursed by both."[2] And in 1775, after men's sincerity in political speculation had come to the test of blood, in his sermon before the provincial congress of Georgia, he reaffirmed this opposition to Independence: "The idea of a separation between America and Great Britain is big with so many and such horrid evils, that every friend to both must shudder at the thought. Every man that gives the most distant hint of such a wish, ought instantly to be suspected as a common enemy. Nothing would more effectually serve the cause of our enemies, than any proposal of this kind. All wise men, and all good men, would instantly speak, write, and act against it. Such a proposal, whenever it should be made, would be an inlet to greater evils than any we have yet suffered."[3]

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[1] "The Law of Liberty," etc., xv.

[2] "The Stamp Act Repealed," 19.

[3] "The Law of Liberty," etc., 25.

When, however, a few months later, many of Zubly's colleagues in political action began to go over to this long repudiated doctrine of separation, he was ferociously denounced, and his character blackened, for the reason that he was unwilling to go with them. That such should have been his fate, especially at such a time, was natural. Nevertheless, the judgment of history must be, that while he and they had alike for years disclaimed and denounced every idea of Independence, they at last came to take a different view of the matter, and he did not. Having shared in the earlier stages of a great political agitation, Zubly could not admit that anything had in the meantime occurred to justify an abandonment of the limits that had been originally fixed for it. His crime was that of every man who begins as a political reformer and refuses to end as a revolutionist.

V.

For palpable reasons, both political and military, it happened that between January and July, 1776, the focal point of the debate over the proposal of Independence was Philadelphia. Shall the American Congress, which had hitherto mentioned that word only to ban it, now bestow upon it an official blessing? Upon that question, even so early as in April, 1776, the minds of all Americans were violently stirred. At Philadelphia, among the most conspicuous of those who were ready to have Congress give its sanction to the word Independence, was Benjamin Franklin, then but a twelvemonth returned from his long sojourn in England, crowned with years and with honors, the most illustrious American at that time in the world. Among those who would refuse to have Congress give its sanction to Independence, was the Reverend William Smith, provost of the College of Philadelphia, orator, writer, a plausible, brilliant, captivating man, an active supporter of all the measures of American opposition down to that time, suspected, however, of having his eye steadfastly fixed on a mitre, sus-

pected, also, of acting just then under the special advice and favor of the king.

On the thirteenth of March, there appeared in the "Pennsylvania Gazette" the first of a series of powerful essays, devoted, in part, to a hostile discussion of the pamphlet "Common Sense," and of the terrible political heresy to which that pamphlet had already won so many converts. These essays, eight in number, bore the title of "Letters of Cato, to the People of Pennsylvania." They were in process of publication from week to week, until the twenty-fourth of April. Partly because they were very able, and partly because they were at once suspected to be by so eminent a citizen and so eminent a Whig as Provost William Smith, they created a most violent fluttering in the highest social circles of Philadelphia, as well as among all ranks of politicians then gathered there. For a modern reader there can be no better reproduction of the very stir and tumult then agitating the capital of the new nation in the weeks immediately preceding the decision for Independence, than is to be derived from one of the replies then given to these "Letters of Cato."[1] This reply was in the form of a playful tract by Francis Hopkinson, entitled "A Prophecy," wherein some seer of an age in the remote past is represented as having a vision of the great and anxious scene then enacting in Philadelphia, in that April, 1776:

"Now it shall come to pass in the latter days, that a new people shall rise up in a far country, and they shall increase exceedingly, and many shall flock unto them; and they shall build cities in the wilderness, and cultivate their lands with the hand of industry, and the fame of them shall spread far and near.

[1] There need be no doubt that Provost Smith was "Cato." In a letter to his wife, written from Philadelphia April 28, 1776, John Adams mentions that it was then "so reported." Francis Hopkinson, in a publication made during Smith's lifetime, expressly declares that it was a fact. Finally the great-grandson and biographer of William Smith expressly admits the fact. "Familiar Letters of John Adams and His Wife," 167; Hopkinson's "Works," i. 94; "Life and Correspondence of William Smith," by H. W. Smith, i. 575.

"And it shall be that the king of islands shall send over and plant in the midst of them a certain tree.[1] Its blossoms shall be delightful to the eye, its fruit pleasant to the taste; and its leaves shall heal them of all manner of diseases. And the people shall cultivate this tree with all possible care; and they shall live under the shadow of its branches, and shall worship it as a god.

"But in process of time, there shall arise a North[2] wind, and shall blast the tree, so that it shall no longer yield its fruit, or afford shelter to the people, but it shall become rotten at the heart; and the North wind will break the branches thereof, and they shall fall upon the heads of the people, and wound many.

"Then a prophet[3] shall arise from amongst this people, and he shall exhort them, and instruct them in all manner of wisdom, and many shall believe in him; and he shall wear spectacles upon his nose; and reverence and esteem shall rest upon his brow. And he will cry aloud, and say: 'Seeing that this tree hath no strength in it, and that it can no longer shelter us from the winds of the North, but is become rotten in the heart, behold now let us cut it down and remove it from us. And in its place we will plant another tree,[4] young and vigorous; and we will water it, and it shall grow, and spread its branches abroad. And, moreover, we will build an high wall to defend it from the winds of the North, that it may be well with us, and our children, and our children's children.'

"And the people shall hearken to the voice of their prophet, for his sayings shall be good in their eyes. And they shall take up every man his spade and his axe,[5] and shall prepare to dig up and cut away the shattered remains

[1] English colonial government in America.

[2] The too obvious facilities offered by the name of George the Third's famous prime minister were a constant source of temptation to political punsters on both sides of the Atlantic.

[3] Dr. Franklin.

[4] American Independence.

[5] The military uprising of the Americans, especially on and after April 19, 1775.

of the blasted and rotten tree, according to the words of their prophet.

"Then a certain wise man [1] shall arise, and shall call himself Cato; and he shall strive to persuade the people to put their trust in the rotten tree, and not to dig it up, or remove it from its place. And he shall harangue with great vehemence, and shall tell them that a rotten tree is better than a sound one; and that it is for the benefit of the people that the North wind should blow upon it, and that the branches thereof should be broken and fall upon and crush them.

"And he shall receive from the king of the islands fetters of gold and chains of silver [2]; and he shall have hopes of great reward if he will fasten them on the necks of the people, and chain them to the trunk of the rotten tree. And this he shall strive to do by every insinuating art in his power. And he shall tell the people that they are not fetters and chains, but shall be as bracelets of gold on their wrists, and rings of silver on their necks, to ornament and decorate them and their children. And his words shall be sweet in the mouth, but very bitter in the belly.

"Moreover, he will threaten them that, if they will not obey his voice, he will whistle with his lips, and raw-head and bloody-bones shall come out of France [3] to devour them and their little one; and he will blow with his horn, and the wild bull of Spain will come and gore them with his horns, and trample upon them with his hoofs, even until they die. And he shall stand upon Mount-seir, and shall pun upon Mount-seir in the face of all the people. And all the people shall laugh him to scorn.

"And it shall come to pass that certain other wise men

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[1] The Reverend William Smith, D.D., provost of the College of Philadelphia.

[2] Dr. Smith was accused of promising offices, titles, and other marks of royal favor as a reward for opposing American Independence.

[3] A frequent and very formidable argument against Independence was that, on losing the protection of England, America would be overrun and parcelled out between France and Spain.

shall also stand up and oppose themselves to Cato; and shall warn the people not to trust in the allurements of his voice, nor to be terrified with his threats, and to hearken to his puns no more. And they shall encourage the people to go on with the work they had taken in hand according to the words of their prophet. And they shall earnestly exhort the people to despise and reject the fetters of gold and the chains of silver, which the king of the islands would fasten upon them.

"And one of these men shall call himself Cassandra,[1] and the other shall call himself the Forester[2]: and they shall fall upon Cato, and shall strip him of every disguise, and show him naked before all the people. And Cassandra shall tie him up, and the Forester shall scourge him until he shall become exceeding sore. Nevertheless, Cato shall not repent, but shall harden his heart, and become very stubborn, and shall be vexed till he die. . . .

"And in process of time, the people shall root up the rotten tree, and in its place they shall plant a young and vigorous tree, and shall effectually defend it from the winds of the North by an high wall. And they shall dress it, and prune it, and cultivate it to their own liking. And the young tree shall grow and flourish and spread its branches far abroad; and the people shall dwell under the shadow of its branches, and shall become an exceeding great, and powerful, and happy nation. And of their increase there shall be no end. And Cato and his works shall be no more remembered amongst them. For Cato shall die, and his works shall follow him."[3]

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[1] Said to be James Cannon, a tutor in the College of Philadelphia, who thus attacked his own official chief. "Letters of John Adams, Addressed to his Wife," i. 105.

[2] Thomas Paine who, during April and May, 1776, published in the Philadelphia newspapers four articles over that signature, the fame of which paled in the incomparable success of his pamphlet entitled "Common Sense."

[3] Hopkinson, "The Miscellaneous Essays," etc., i. 92–97.

VI.

Perhaps no other living voice then lifted up among the people in championship of the proposed assertion of complete nationality, spoke out with greater authority, than the voice of William Henry Drayton, then chief justice of South Carolina by appointment of its provincial congress, himself of an opulent and aristocratic family in that colony, educated at Westminster School and at Baliol College, Oxford, and already distinguished for his activity as a political writer,—an activity which did not cease until shortly before his death in 1779.

In politics, his master principle seems to have been individualism—personal and local; and he was, perhaps, the first citizen of South Carolina to set forth on behalf of his own neighborhood those extreme claims to political autonomy which have since had both a brilliant and a tragic connection with the history of that State. In 1769, under his favorite signature of "Freeman," he wrote against the new patriotic "associations" then pushing for adoption in the several colonies—to which he objected for the characteristic reason that, under the pretence of promoting liberty, they wrought the most brutal "encroachments on his private rights."[1] Being on this account regarded as a friend of prerogative, he enjoyed for some years the royal favor, which was shown by his appointment as privy councillor for South Carolina in 1771, and as assistant judge in 1774. Gradually, however, the ministerial policy toward the colonies aroused his jealousy on behalf of the same imperiled interest—that of individual rights; and in August, 1774, he published in Charleston a bold and powerful pamphlet, entitled "Letter from Freeman of South Carolina, to the Deputies of North America, assembled in the High Court of Congress at Philadelphia." In consequence of the anti-ministerial position taken by Drayton in this pamphlet, he was shortly afterward removed from his offices as assistant

[1] J. Drayton, "Memoirs of the American Revolution," i. xiv.

judge and privy councilor—a chastisement which had the effect of winning for him the confidence and affection of the Revolutionist party. In 1775, he was made a member both of the council of safety and of the provincial congress in South Carolina ; in March, 1776, he was made chief justice. In October, 1776, over the signature of " A Carolinian," Drayton published a trenchant address to Lord Howe and to General Sir William Howe, exposing the dangerous tendency of their declaration for restoring peace to the colonies.[1] In January, 1778, he delivered before the general assembly of South Carolina a speech against the ratification by that State of the articles of confederation,[2]—the burden of his argument being one upon which the subsequent decade threw a grotesque light,—namely, that, by those articles, the States were stripped of powers that they could not safely part with, while thereby was created a central government of portentous aspect through its enormous accumulation of authority! In September, 1778, he published " An Answer to the Letters and Addresses of the Commissioners " of the king [3]—probably Drayton's last contribution to the literary discussion of Revolutionary topics.

It was while serving in his great office as chief justice of South Carolina, and in accordance with a custom then prevalent, that he delivered from time to time a series of oratorical and politico-legal harangues to the grand jury, on the leading questions then at issue. In one of these harangues, he virtually issued on behalf of his own colony, a declaration of independence, more than two months in advance of the more renowned Declaration made by the Continental Congress on behalf of all the colonies; for, so early as the 23d of April, 1776, acting as chief justice, he gave from the bench the opinion that, by " the law of the land," and in consequence of violence done to American rights by King George the Third, that monarch had " abdi-

[1] John Drayton, " Memoirs of the American Revolution," i. xvii.

[2] Niles, " Principles and Acts," etc., 98–115.

[3] " The Remembrancer," vii. 55–64.

cated the government" of South Carolina, and that, with respect to that particular colony, the throne had become vacant—the king having henceforth "no authority" there, and its people owing "no obedience to him." As this fearless and trenchant speech of the Revolutionary chief justice of South Carolina was couched in the language of judicial authority, and was delivered from the bench to the grand jury with all the ceremony of the judicial function, it deeply impressed the popular imagination, and seemed to give to a measure previously called lawless the consecration of law.[1]

[1] Any reader who may care to go more deeply into this curious phase of Revolutionary agitation, will find it profitable to read the three principal charges given by Mr. Chief Justice Drayton, which may be conveniently found as follows: for April 23, 1776, in Niles, "Principles and Acts," etc., 72–80; for October 15, 1776, ibid. 81–92; for October 15, 1777, ibid. 92–98.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THOMAS JEFFERSON AND THE GREAT DECLARATION.

I.—Jefferson's first entrance into Congress in June, 1775—Public papers then written by him—"Resolutions of the Virginia House of Burgesses"—"A Summary View of the Rights of British America"—"Address of the House of Burgesses."

II.—His special gifts for service in Congress—His ability as a writer of state papers promptly recognized there—Is at the head of the committee to prepare the Declaration of Independence, and becomes its draughtsman.

III.—Two opposite conditions of mind with respect to the intellectual worth of that document—Its great authority acquired in the face of abundant criticism.

IV.—Attacked in the year of its promulgation—Governor Thomas Hutchinson's "Strictures"—"An Answer to the Declaration of Congress" by John Lind—Criticised by modern English writers of liberal politics—Earl Russell—His criticism anticipated by John Adams—Criticism by Goldwin Smith.

V.—Criticised by American statesmen and historians—By Calhoun, Richard Henry Lee, Stephen Cullen Carpenter, Charles Campbell, Littell, Paul Leicester Ford, and especially by John Adams.

VI.—Its alleged lack of originality—In what sense true—In what sense not true.

VII.—The Declaration of Independence to be judged with respect to its origin and purpose—Avowedly a party manifesto in a bitter race quarrel—Contains two principal accusations—Are these to be set aside as unhistoric?—The accusation respecting an intended tyranny over the colonists—The accusation that George III. was chiefly responsible for this intended tyranny.

VIII.—Its immediate success—Its vast subsequent influence over the American people—Connection of its preamble with the overthrow of slavery in America—Its influence upon the political and ethical ideals of mankind.

IX.—Estimate of its purely literary character.

I.

On the twenty-first of June, 1775, Thomas Jefferson took his seat for the first time as a member of the Continental Congress, bringing with him into that famous assemblage,

as we are told by an older member of it, "a reputation for literature, science, and a happy talent of composition. Writings of his were handed about, remarkable for the peculiar felicity of expression."[1] He had then but recently passed his thirty-second birthday, and was known to be the author of two or three public papers of considerable note.

Of these, the first one, written in 1769, could hardly have been among those compositions of his which were handed about for the admiration of Congress: it consisted of the "Resolutions of the Virginia House of Burgesses" in response to the speech of their new governor, Lord Botetourt, and was remarkable for nothing so much as for its obsequious tone—especially for its meek assurance on behalf of the burgesses that, in all their deliberations, it should be their "ruling principle" to consider the interests of Virginia and those of Great Britain as "inseparably the same."[2]

His second public paper, written in the early summer of 1774, indicates how perfectly, within that interval of five years, this adept at "felicity of expression" had passed from the stage of deference, to something bordering on that of truculence, as regards the official custodians of authority. The extraordinary composition now referred to, was first published at Williamsburg in the year in which it was written, and bears the following title: "A Summary View of the Rights of British America. Set Forth in Some Resolutions intended for the Inspection of the Present Delegates of the People of Virginia now in Convention."[3] Herein his majesty is informed, without the waste of a single word in mere politeness, that "he is no more than the chief officer of the people, appointed by the laws, and circumscribed with definite powers, to assist in working the great machine

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[1] John Adams, in "The Life of Timothy Pickering," by Charles Wentworth Upham, iv. 466–467; also, in "The Works of John Adams," ii. 513–514 n.

[2] "Journal of the House of Burgesses for 1769," p. 4; reprinted in "The Writings of Jefferson," Ford ed., i. 369.

[3] Ibid. 421–447.

of government erected for their use, and consequently subject to their superintendence." This, of course, might be a somewhat novel and startling view of himself for the "chief magistrate of the British empire" to take; but after he shall have got accustomed to it, he would see, doubtless, how eminently fitting it was that he should at last receive from the people of America a "joint address, penned in the language of truth, and divested of those expressions of servility which would persuade his majesty that we were asking favors, and not rights."[1] "Let those flatter who fear: it is not an American art. To give praise which is not due might be well from the venal, but would ill become those who are asserting the rights of human nature. They know, and will therefore say, that kings are the servants, not the proprietors, of the people. Open your breast, sire, to liberal and expanded thought. Let not the name of George the Third be a blot in the page of history. . . . The whole art of government consists in the art of being honest. Only aim to do your duty, and mankind will give you credit where you fail. No longer persevere in sacrificing the rights of one part of the empire to the inordinate desires of another, but deal out to all equal and impartial right. . . . This, sire, is the advice of your great American council, on the observance of which may perhaps depend your felicity and future fame, and the preservation of that harmony which alone can continue both in Great Britain and America the reciprocal advantages of their connection."[2] Another notable state paper of Jefferson's, was one on which he had been engaged immediately prior to his departure from the legislature of Virginia, in order to take his seat in Congress,—an "Address of the House of Burgesses,"[3] adopted June 12, 1775, and having reference to Lord North's plan for conciliating the American colonies. In this paper, the burgesses of Virginia are made to review the long record of political blunders and crimes perpetrated

[1] "The Writings of Thomas Jefferson," Ford ed., i. 429.

[2] Ibid. 446.

[3] Ibid. 455–459.

by the British government in its relation to America, and then to declare that, for the further management of the dispute, they looked to the General Congress.

II.

Certainly, it is not strange that the more radical members of Congress welcomed among them this young man, who, being in opinion even more radical than themselves, also possessed so striking a talent for unabashed and sonorous talk to governors of royal provinces and even to kings. Moreover, he soon won the hearts of the speech makers in that body by being himself no speech maker; and while he thus avoided irritating collisions and rivalries with his associates, he commanded their further admiration by being always "prompt, frank, explicit, and decisive upon committees and in conversation,"—not even Samuel Adams himself being more so.[1] Accordingly, only three days after he had taken his seat, the great honor was paid him of being joined with the foremost political writer of the day—the author of the "Farmer's Letters"—as a special committee for preparing the declaration of the Americans on taking up arms.[2] Furthermore, in less than a month after his arrival, this novice in congressional business was given the second place on a committee, consisting of such veterans as Franklin, John Adams, and Richard Henry Lee, appointed to draft the American reply to Lord North's conciliatory propositions.[3]

Thus it came to pass, that when, early in June, 1776, Congress saw before it the probability of its soon adopting

[1] "The Works of John Adams," ii. 514 n.

[2] For this declaration, Jefferson prepared two drafts, both of which are given in Ford's edition of his "Writings," i. 462–476. The famous and noble declaration actually proclaimed by Congress, was wholly the work of Dickinson; although, through an error of memory to which, in such matters, Jefferson was peculiarly liable, he himself, in his "Autobiography," laid claim to the authorship of "the last four paragraphs and the half of the preceding one." Ibid. 17.

[3] His rough draft for this important paper is given by Ford, in Jefferson's "Writings," i. 476–482.

the tremendous resolution,—"that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown; and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved,"[1]—then Thomas Jefferson, receiving the largest number of votes, was placed at the head of the committee of illustrious men to whom was assigned the task of preparing a suitable Declaration of Independence, and thereby he became the draftsman of the one American state paper that has reached to supreme distinction in the world, and that seems likely to last as long as American civilization lasts.

III.

It can hardly be doubted that some hindrance to a right estimate of the Declaration of Independence is occasioned by either of two opposite conditions of mind, both of which are often to be met with among us: on the one hand, a condition of hereditary, uncritical awe and worship of the American Revolution and of this state paper as its absolutely perfect and glorious expression; on the other hand, a later condition of cultivated distrust of the Declaration, as a piece of writing lifted up into inordinate renown by the passionate and heroic circumstances of its origin, and ever since then extolled beyond reason by the blind energy of patriotic enthusiasm. Turning from the former state of mind,—which obviously calls for no further comment,—we may note, as a partial illustration of the latter, that American confidence in the supreme intellectual merit of this all-famous document received a serious wound, some forty years ago, from the hand of Rufus Choate, when, with a courage greater than would now be required for such an act, he characterized it as made up of "glittering and sounding generalities of natural right."[2] What the great advocate then so unhesitantly suggested, many a thought-

[1] "Journals of the American Congress," i. 368–369.

[2] "Letter of Rufus Choate to the Whigs of Maine," 1856.

ful American since then has at least suspected,—that this famous proclamation, as a piece of political literature, cannot stand the test of modern analysis; that it belongs to the immense class of over-praised productions; that it is, in fact, a stately patchwork of sweeping propositions of somewhat doubtful validity; that it has long imposed upon mankind by the well-known effectiveness of verbal glitter and sound; that, at the best, it is an example of florid political declamation belonging to the sophomoric period of our national life—a period which, as we flatter ourselves, we have now outgrown.

Nevertheless, it is to be noted that, whatever authority the Declaration of Independence has acquired in the world, has been due to no lack of criticism, either at the time of its first appearance or since then,—a fact which seems to tell in favor of its essential worth and strength. From the date of its orginal publication down to the present moment, it has been attacked again and again, either in anger or in contempt, by friends as well as by enemies of the American Revolution, by liberals in politics as well as by conservatives. It has been censured for its substance, it has been censured for its form: for its misstatements of fact, for its fallacies in reasoning; for its audacious novelties and paradoxes, for its total lack of all novelty, for its repetition of old and threadbare statements, even for its downright plagiarisms; finally, for its grandiose and vaporing style.

IV.

One of the earliest and ablest of its assailants was Thomas Hutchinson, the last civil governor of the colony of Massachusetts, who, being stranded in London by the political storm which had blown him thither, published there, in the autumn of 1776, his "Strictures upon the Declaration of the Congress at Philadelphia"[1]; wherein, with an unsur-

[1] His pamphlet is dated October 15, 1776. The copy of it now before me, the property of Cornell University, is the very copy presented "To Sir Francis Bernard, Bart., From the Author."

passed knowledge of the origin of the controversy, and with an unsurpassed acumen in the discussion of it, he traverses the entire document, paragraph by paragraph, for the purpose of showing that its allegations in support of American Independence are "false and frivolous."[1]

A better written, and, upon the whole, a more effective arraignment of the great Declaration, was the celebrated pamphlet by an English barrister, John Lind, "An Answer to the Declaration of the American Congress,"—a pamphlet evidently written at the instigation of the ministry, and sent abroad under its approval. Here, again, the manifesto of Congress is subjected to a searching criticism, in order to show that the theory of government put forward in its preamble is "absurd and visionary"[2]; that its political maxims are not only "repugnant to the British constitution" but "subversive of every actual or imaginable kind of government"[3]; and that its specific charges against the king and parliament are "calumnies,"[4]—since they allege as usurpations and as encroachments certain acts of government under George the Third identical in character with those which had been "constantly exercised by his predecessors and their parliaments," and which had been on many occasions recognized as constitutional by the American colonial assemblies.[5] It is doubtful if any disinterested student of history, any competent judge of reasoning, will now deny to this pamphlet the praise of making out a strong case against the historical accuracy and the logical soundness of many parts of the Declaration of Independence.

Undoubtedly, the force of such censures is for us much broken by the fact, that those censures proceeded from men who were themselves partisans in the Revolutionary controversy and bitterly hostile to the whole movement which the Declaration was intended to justify. Such is not the case, however, with the leading modern English critics of the

[1] "Strictures," etc., 3. [2] "An Answer," etc., 119.
[3] Ibid. [4] Ibid. 5. [5] Ibid. 123–130.

same document, who, while blaming in severe terms the policy of the British government toward the Thirteen Colonies, have also found much to abate from the confidence due to this official announcement of the reasons for our secession from the empire. For example, Earl Russell, after frankly saying that the great disruption proclaimed by the Declaration of Independence, was a result which Great Britain had "used every means most fitted to bring about," such as "vacillation in council, harshness in language, feebleness in execution, disregard of American sympathies and affections," also pointed out that "the truth of this memorable Declaration" was "warped" by "one singular defect," namely, its exclusive and excessive arraignment of George the Third "as a single and despotic tyrant," much like Philip the Second to the people of the Netherlands.[1]

This temperate criticism from an able and a liberal English statesman of the present century, may be said to touch the very core of the problem as to the historic justice of our great indictment of the last king of America; and there is deep significance in the fact, that this is the very criticism upon the document, which, as John Adams tells us, he himself had in mind when it was first submitted to him in committee, and even when, shortly afterwards, he advocated its adoption by Congress. After mentioning certain things in it with which he was delighted, he adds: "There were other expressions which I would not have inserted if I had drawn it up,—particularly that which called the king tyrant. I thought this too personal; for I never believed George to be a tyrant in disposition and in nature. I always believed him to be deceived by his courtiers on both sides of the Atlantic, and, in his official capacity only, cruel. I thought the expression too passionate, and too much like scolding, for so grave and solemn a document; but, as Franklin and Sherman were to inspect it afterwards, I

[1] Russell, Lord John, "Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox," i. 151–152.

thought it would not become me to strike it out. I consented to report it." [1]

A more minute and a more poignant criticism of the Declaration of Independence has been made in recent years by still another English writer of liberal tendencies, who, however, in his capacity as critic, seems here to labor under the disadvantage of having transferred to the document which he undertakes to judge, much of the extreme dislike which he has for the man who wrote it,—whom, indeed, he regards as a sophist, as a demagogue, as quite capable of inveracity in speech, and as bearing some resemblance to Robespierre "in his feline nature, his malignant egotism, and his intense suspiciousness, as well as in his bloody-minded, yet possibly sincere, philanthropy." [2] In the opinion of Professor Goldwin Smith, our great national manifesto is written "in a highly rhetorical strain" [3]; "it opens with sweeping aphorisms about the natural rights of man, at which political science now smiles, and which . . . might seem strange when framed for slave-holding communities by a publicist who himself held slaves" [4]; while, in its specifications of facts, it "is not more scrupulously truthful than are the general utterances" [5] of the statesman who was its scribe. Its charges that the several offensive acts of the king, besides "evincing a design to

[1] "The Works of John Adams," ii. 514 n. The distinction here made by John Adams between the personal and the official character of George III., is quite pointless in its application to the Declaration of Independence; since it is of the King's official character only that the Declaration speaks. Moreover, John Adams's testimony in 1822 that he "never believed George to be a tyrant in disposition and in nature," is completely destroyed by John Adams's own testimony on that subject as recorded at an earlier period of his life. For example, in 1780, in a letter to M. Dumas, he thus speaks of George III.—"Europe, in general, is much mistaken in that character; it is a pity that he should be believed to be so amiable; the truth is far otherwise. *Nerone neronior* is nearer the truth." Ibid. vii. 327.

[2] Goldwin Smith, in "The Nineteenth Century," No. 131, January, 1888, p. 109.

[3] "The United States. An Outline of Political History," 88.

[4] Ibid. 87–88.

[5] "The Nineteenth Century," No. 131, p. 111.

reduce the colonists under absolute despotism," "all had as their direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny," are simply "propositions which history cannot accept."[1] Moreover, the Declaration "blinks the fact that many of the acts, styled steps of usurpation, were measures of repression which, however unwise or excessive, had been provoked by popular outrage."[2] "No government could allow its officers to be assaulted and their houses sacked, its loyal lieges to be tarred and feathered, or the property of merchants sailing under its flag to be thrown by lawless hands into the sea."[3] Even "the preposterous violence and the manifest insincerity of the suppressed clause" against slavery and the slave-trade, "are enough to create suspicion as to the spirit in which the whole document was framed."[4]

V.

Finally, as has been already intimated, not even among Americans themselves has the Declaration of Independence been permitted to pass on into the enjoyment of its superb renown, without much critical disparagement at the hands of statesmen and historians. No doubt Calhoun had its preamble in mind, when he delcared that "nothing can be more unfounded and false" than "the prevalent opinion that all men are born free and equal"; for "it rests upon the assumption of a fact which is contrary to universal observation."[5] Of course, all Americans who have shared to any extent in Calhoun's doctrines respecting human society, could hardly fail to agree with him in regarding as fallacious and worthless those general propositions in the Declaration which seem to constitute its logical starting point, as well as its ultimate defense.

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[1] "The United States," etc., 88. [2] Ibid.
[3] "The Nineteenth Century," No. 131, p. 111. [4] Ibid.
[5] "A Disquisition on Government," in "The Works of John C. Calhoun," i. 57.

Perhaps, however, the most frequent form of disparagement to which Jefferson's great state paper has been subjected among us, is that which would minimize his merit in composing it, by denying to it the merit of originality. For example, Richard Henry Lee sneered at it as a thing "copied from Locke's treatise on government."[1] The author of a life of Jefferson, published in the year of Jefferson's retirement from the presidency, suggests that the credit of having composed the Declaration of Independence "has been perhaps more generally, than truly, given by the public" to that great man.[2] Charles Campbell, the historian of Virginia, intimates that some expressions in the document were taken without acknowledgment from Aphra Behn's tragi-comedy, "The Widow Ranter, or, The History of Bacon in Virginia."[3] John Stockton Littell describes the Declaration of Independence as "that enduring monument at once of patriotism, and of genius and skill in the art of appropriation,"—asserting that "for the sentiments and much of the language" of it, Jefferson was indebted to Chief Justice Drayton's charge to the grand jury of Charleston delivered in April, 1776, as well as to the declaration of independence said to have been adopted by some citizens of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, in May, 1775.[4] Even the latest and most critical editor of the writings of Jefferson calls attention to the fact, that a glance at the declaration of rights, as adopted by Virginia on the 12th of June, 1776, "would seem to indicate the source from which Jefferson derived a most important and popular part" of his famous production.[5] By no one, however, has the charge of a lack of originality been pressed with so much decisiveness as by John Adams, who took evident pleasure in speaking of it as a document in which were merely "reca-

[1] "The Writings of Thomas Jefferson," H. A. Washington ed., vii. 305.
[2] Stephen Cullen Carpenter, "Memoirs of Thomas Jefferson," i. 11.
[3] "History of Virginia," 317.
[4] "Graydon's Men and Times of the American Revolution," 323 n.
[5] Paul Leicester Ford, "The Writings of Thomas Jefferson," i. Introd. xxvi.

pitulated" previous and well-known statements of American rights and wrongs,[1] and who, as late as in the year 1822, deliberately wrote that "there is not an idea in it but what had been hackneyed in Congress for two years before. The substance of it is contained in the declaration of rights and the violation of those rights, in the journals of Congress, in 1774. Indeed, the essence of it is contained in a pamphlet, voted and printed by the town of Boston, before the first Congress met, composed by James Otis, as I suppose, in one of his lucid intervals, and pruned and polished by Samuel Adams."[2]

VI.

Perhaps nowhere in our literature would it be possible to find a criticism brought forward by a really able man against any piece of writing, less applicable to the case, and of less force or value, than is this particular criticism by John Adams and others, as to the lack of originality in the Declaration of Independence. Indeed, for such a paper as Jefferson was commissioned to write, the one quality which it could not properly have had—the one quality which would have been fatal to its acceptance either by the American Congress or by the American people—is originality. They were then at the culmination of a tremendous controversy over alleged grievances of the most serious kind—a controversy that had been fiercely raging for at least twelve years. In the course of that long dispute, every phase of it, whether as to abstract right or constitutional privilege or personal procedure, had been presented in almost every conceivable form of speech. At last, they had resolved, in view of all this experience, no longer to prosecute the controversy as

[1] "The Works of John Adams," ii. 377.

[2] Ibid. 514 n. Thus, the ingenuous reader has the happiness of seeing the eternal fitness of things complied with, and the chief intellectual merit of the Declaration of Independence brought back to the place where it belongs, and there divided between the town of Boston, James Otis, and the Adams family.

members of the empire: they had resolved to revolt, and casting off forever their ancient fealty to the British crown, to separate from the empire, and to establish themselves as a new nation among the nations of the earth. In this emergency, as it happened, Jefferson was called upon to put into form a suitable statement of the chief considerations which prompted them to this great act of revolution, and which, as they believed, justified it. What, then, was Jefferson to do? Was he to regard himself as a mere literary essayist, set to produce before the world a sort of prize dissertation, —a calm, analytic, judicial treatise on history and politics with a particular application to Anglo-American affairs,— one essential merit of which would be its originality as a contribution to historical and political literature? Was he not, rather, to regard himself as, for the time being, the very mouthpiece and prophet of the people whom he represented, and as such required to bring together and to set in order, in their name, not what was new, but what was old; to gather up into his own soul, as much as possible, whatever was then also in their souls—their very thoughts and passions, their ideas of constitutional law, their interpretations of fact, their opinions as to men and as to events in all that ugly quarrel; their notions of justice, of civic dignity, of human rights; finally, their memories of wrongs which seemed to them intolerable, especially of wrongs inflicted upon them during those twelve years by the hands of insolent and brutal men, in the name of the king, and by his apparent command?

Moreover, as the nature of the task laid upon him made it necessary that he should thus state, as the reasons for their intended act, those very considerations both as to fact and as to opinion which had actually operated upon their minds, so did it require him to do so, to some extent, in the very language which the people themselves, in their more formal and deliberate utterances, had all along been using. In the development of political life in England and America, there had already been created a vast literature of

constitutional progress,—a literature common to both portions of the English race, pervaded by its own stately traditions, and reverberating certain great phrases which formed, as one may say, almost the vernacular of English justice, and of English aspiration for a free, manly, and orderly political life. In this vernacular the Declaration of Independence was written. The phraseology thus characteristic of it, is the very phraseology of the champions of constitutional expansion, of civic dignity and of progress, within the English race ever since Magna Charta; of the great state papers of English freedom in the seventeenth century, particularly the Petition of Right in 1629, and the Bill of Rights in 1689; of the great English charters for colonization in America; of the great English exponents of legal and political progress,—Sir Edward Coke, John Milton, Algernon Sidney, John Locke; finally, of the great American exponents of political liberty and of the chief representative bodies, whether local or general, which had convened in America from the time of the Stamp Act Congress until that of the Congress which resolved upon our Independence. To say, therefore, that the official Declaration of that resolve is a paper made up of the very opinions, beliefs, unbeliefs, the very sentiments, prejudices, passions, even the errors in judgment and the personal misconstructions—if they were such—which then actually impelled the American people to that mighty act, and that all these are expressed in the very phrases which they had been accustomed to use, is to pay to that state paper the highest tribute as to its fitness for the purpose for which it was framed.

Of much of this, also, Jefferson himself seems to have been conscious; and perhaps never does he rise before us with more dignity, with more truth, than when, late in his lifetime, hurt by the captious and jangling words of disparagement then recently put into writing by his old comrade, to the effect that the Declaration of Independence "contained no new ideas, that it is a commonplace compilation, its sentiments hackneyed in Congress for two years before, and its

essence contained in Otis's pamphlet," Jefferson quietly replied that perhaps these statements might "all be true: of that I am not to be the judge. . . . Whether I had gathered my ideas from reading or reflection, I do not know. I know only that I turned to neither book nor pamphlet while writing it. I did not consider it as any part of my charge to invent new ideas altogether, and to offer no sentiment which had ever been expressed before."[1]

Before passing from this phase of the subject, however, it should be added that, while the Declaration of Independence lacks originality in the sense just indicated, in another and perhaps in a higher sense, it possesses originality—it is individualized by the character and the genius of its author. Jefferson gathered up the thoughts and emotions and even the characteristic phrases of the people for whom he wrote, and these he perfectly incorporated with what was already in his own mind, and then to the music of his own keen, rich, passionate, and enkindling style, he mustered them into that stately and triumphant procession wherein, as some of us still think, they will go marching on to the world's end.

There were then in Congress several other men who could have written the Declaration of Independence, and written it well—notably, Franklin, either of the two Adamses, Richard Henry Lee, William Livingston, and, best of all—but for his own opposition to the measure—John Dickinson; but had any one of these other men written the Declaration of Independence, while it would have contained, doubtless, nearly the same topics and nearly the same great formulas of political statement, it would yet have been a wholly different composition from this of Jefferson's. No one at all familiar with his other writings as well as with the writings of his chief contemporaries, could ever have a moment's doubt, even if the fact were not already notorious,

[1] "The Writings of Thomas Jefferson," H. A. Washington ed., vii. 305. This was written to Madison, 30 August, 1823, and should be compared with Madison's letter in reply, 6 September, 1823: "Letters and Other Writings of James Madison," iii. 336–337.

that this document was by Jefferson. He put into it something that was his own, and that no one else could have put there. He put himself into it,—his own genius, his own moral force, his faith in God, his faith in ideas, his love of innovation, his passion for progress, his invincible enthusiasm, his intolerance of prescription, of injustice, of cruelty, his sympathy, his clarity of vision, his affluence of diction, his power to fling out great phrases which will long fire and cheer the souls of men struggling against political unrighteousness. And herein lies its essential originality, perhaps the most precious, and indeed almost the only, originality ever attaching to any great literary product that is representative of its time. He made for himself no improper claim, therefore, when he directed that upon the granite obelisk at his grave should be carved the words,—"Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence." [1]

VII.

If the Declaration of Independence is now to be fairly judged by us, it must be judged with reference to what it was intended to be—namely, an impassioned manifesto of one party, and that the weaker party, in a violent race quarrel; of a party resolved, at last, upon the extremity of revolution, and already menaced by the inconceivable disaster of being defeated in the very act of armed rebellion against the mightiest military power on earth. This manifesto, then, is not to be censured because, being avowedly a statement of its own side of the quarrel, it does not also contain a moderate and judicial statement of the opposite side; or because, being necessarily partisan in method, it is likewise both partisan and vehement in tone; or because it bristles with accusations against the enemy so fierce and so unqualified as now to seem in some respects overdrawn; or because it resounds with certain great aphorisms about the

[1] Randall, "The Life of Thomas Jefferson," iii. 563.

natural rights of man, at which, indeed, political science cannot now smile except to its own discomfiture and shame —aphorisms which are likely to abide in this world as the chief source and inspiration of heroic enterprises among men for self-deliverance from oppression.

Taking into account, therefore, as we are bound to do, the circumstances of its origin, and especially its purpose as a solemn and piercing appeal to mankind, on behalf of a small and weak nation against the alleged injustice and cruelty of a great and powerful one, it still remains our duty to enquire whether, as has been asserted in our time, history must set aside either of the two central charges embodied in the Declaration of Independence.

The first of these charges affirms that the several acts complained of by the colonists, evinced "a design to reduce them under absolute despotism," and had as their "direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny" over the American people. Was this, indeed, a groundless charge, in the sense intended by the words "despotism" and "tyranny,"—that is, in the sense commonly given to those words in the usage of the English-speaking race? According to that usage, it was not an oriental despotism that was meant, nor a Greek tyranny, nor a Roman, nor a Spanish. The sort of despot, the sort of tyrant, whom the English people, ever since the time of King John and especially during the period of the Stuarts, had been accustomed to look for and to guard against, was the sort of tyrant or despot that could be evolved out of the conditions of English political life. Furthermore, he was not by them expected to appear among them at the outset in the fully developed shape of a Philip or an Alva in the Netherlands. They were able to recognize him, they were prepared to resist him, in the earliest and most incipient stage of his being—at the moment, in fact, when he should make his first attempt to gain all power over his people by assuming the single power to take their property without their consent. Hence it was, as Edmund Burke pointed out in the house

of commons only a few weeks before the American Revolution entered upon its military phase, that in England "the great contests for freedom . . . were from the earliest times chiefly upon the question of taxing. Most of the contests in the ancient commonwealths turned primarily on the right of election of magistrates, or on the balance among the several orders of the state. The question of money was not with them so immediate. But in England it was otherwise. On this point of taxes the ablest pens and most eloquent tongues have been exercised, the greatest spirits have acted and suffered. . . . They took infinite pains to inculcate, as a fundamental principle, that in all monarchies the people must in effect themselves, mediately or immediately, possess the power of granting their own money, or no shadow of liberty could subsist. The colonies draw from you, as with their life-blood, these ideas and principles. Their love of liberty, as with you, fixed and attached on this specific point of taxing. Liberty might be safe or might be endangered in twenty other particulars without their being much pleased or alarmed. Here they felt its pulse; and as they found that beat, they thought themselves sick or sound." [1]

Accordingly, the meaning which the English race on both sides of the Atlantic were accustomed to attach to the words "tyranny" and "despotism," was a meaning to some degree ideal: it was a meaning drawn from the extraordinary political sagacity with which that race is endowed, from their extraordinary sensitiveness as to the use of the taxing-power in government, from their instinctive perception of the commanding place of the taxing-power among all the other forms of power in the state, from their perfect assurance that he who holds the purse with the power to fill it and to empty it, holds the key of the situation,—can maintain an army of his own, can rule without consulting parliament, can silence criticism, can crush opposition, can

[1] Speech on moving his "Resolutions for Conciliation with the Colonies," March 22, 1775. "The Works of Edmund Burke," ii. 120–121.

strip his subjects of every vestige of political life; in other words, he can make slaves of them, he can make a despot and a tyrant of himself. Therefore, the system which in the end might develop into results so palpably tyrannic and despotic, they bluntly called a tyranny and a despotism in the beginning. To say, therefore, that the Declaration of Independence did the same, is to say that it spoke good English. Of course, history will be ready to set aside the charge thus made in language not at all liable to be misunderstood, just so soon as history is ready to set aside the common opinion that the several acts of the British government, from 1763 to 1776, for laying and enforcing taxation in America, did evince a somewhat particular and systematic design to take away some portion of the property of the American people without their consent.

The second of the two great charges contained in the Declaration of Independence, while intimating that some share in the blame is due to the British parliament and to the British people, yet fastens upon the king himself as the one person chiefly responsible for the scheme of American tyranny therein set forth, and culminates in the frank description of him as "a prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant." Is this accusation of George the Third now to be set aside as unhistoric? Was that king, or was he not, chiefly responsible for the American policy of the British government between the years 1763 and 1776? If he was so, then the historic soundness of the most important portion of the Declaration of Independence is vindicated.

Fortunately, this question can be answered without hesitation, and in few words; and for these few words, an American writer of to-day, conscious of his own bias of nationality, will rightly prefer to cite such as have been uttered by the ablest English historians of our time, who have dealt with the subject. Upon their statements alone it must be concluded, that George the Third ascended his throne with the fixed purpose of resuming to the crown

many of those powers which by the constitution of England did not then belong to it, and that in this purpose, at least during the first twenty-five years of his reign, he substantially succeeded,—himself determining what should be the policy of each administration, what opinions his ministers should advocate in parliament, and what measures parliament itself should adopt. "The king desired," says Sir Erskine May, "to undertake personally the chief administration of public affairs, to direct the policy of his ministers, and himself to distribute the patronage of the crown. He was ambitious not only to reign, but to govern." "Strong as were the ministers, the king was resolved to wrest all power from their hands, and to exercise it himself." "But what was this, in effect, but to assert that the king should be his own minister? . . . The king's tactics were fraught with danger, as well to the crown itself, as to the constitutional liberties of the people." [1]

Already, prior to the year 1778, according to Lecky, the king had "laboriously built up" in England a "system of personal government"; and it was because he was unwilling to have this system disturbed, that he then refused, "in defiance of the most earnest representations of his own minister and of the most eminent politicians of every party . . . to send for the greatest of living statesmen at the moment when the empire appeared to be in the very agonies of dissolution. . . . Either Chatham or Rockingham would have insisted that the policy of the country should be directed by its responsible ministers, and not dictated by an irresponsible sovereign." This refusal of the king to adopt the course which was called for by the constitution, and which would have taken the control of the policy of the government out of his hands, was, according to the same great historian, an act "the most criminal in the whole reign of George the Third, . . . as criminal as

[1] These sentences occur in the chapter on "The Influence of the Crown during the Reign of George III.," in Sir Erskine May's "Constitutional History of England," i. 11, 12, 14–15.

any of those acts which led Charles the First to the scaffold."[1]

Even so early as the year 1768, according to John Richard Green, "George the Third had at last reached his aim." In the early days of the ministry which began in that year, "his influence was felt to be predominant. In its later and more disastrous days it was supreme; for Lord North, who became the head of the ministry on Grafton's retirement in 1770, was the mere mouthpiece of the king. 'Not only did he direct the minister,' a careful observer tells us, 'in all important matters of foreign and domestic policy, but he instructed him as to the management of debates in parliament, suggested what motions should be made or opposed, and how measures should be carried. He reserved for himself all the patronage, he arranged the whole cast of the administration, settled the relative place and pretensions of ministers of state, law officers, and members of the household, nominated and promoted the English and Scotch judges, appointed and translated bishops and deans, and dispensed other preferments in the church. He disposed of military governments, regiments, and commissions, and himself ordered the marching of troops. He gave and refused titles, honors, and pensions.' All this immense patronage was steadily used for the creation and maintenance of a party in both houses of parliament attached to the king himself. . . . George was, in fact, sole minister during the fifteen years which followed; and the shame of the darkest hour of English history lies wholly at his door."[2]

Surely, until these tremendous verdicts of English history shall be set aside, there need be no anxiety in any quarter as to the historic soundness of the two great accusations which together make up the principal portion of the Declaration of Independence. In the presence of these verdicts, also, even the passion, the intensity of language, in

[1] "A History of England in the Eighteenth Century," iv. 457–458.

[2] "A Short History of the English People," 736–737.

which those accusations are uttered, seem to find a perfect justification. Indeed, in the light of the most recent and most unprejudiced expert testimony, the whole document, both in its substance and in its form, seems to have been the logical response of a nation of brave men to the great words of the greatest of English statesmen, as spoken in the house of commons precisely ten years before: "This kingdom has no right to lay a tax on the colonies.[1] . . . Sir, I rejoice that America has resisted. Three millions of people so dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily to submit to be slaves, would have been fit instruments to have made slaves of the rest." [2]

VIII.

It is proper for us to remember that what we call criticism, is not the only valid test of the genuineness and worth of any piece of writing of great practical interest to mankind: there is, also, the test of actual use and service in the world, in direct contact with the common sense and the moral sense of large masses of men, under various conditions, and for a long period. Probably no writing which is not essentially sound and true has ever survived this test.

Neither from this test has the great Declaration any need to shrink. Probably no public paper ever more perfectly satisfied the immediate purposes for which it was sent forth. From one end of the country to the other, and as fast as it could be spread among the people, it was greeted in public and in private with every demonstration of approval and delight.[3] To a marvelous degree, it quickened the friends of the Revolution for their great task. "This Declaration," wrote one of its signers but a few days after it had been

[1] "The Celebrated Speech of a Celebrated Commoner," London, 1766, p. 5.

[2] Ibid. 12.

[3] Frank Moore, in his "Diary of the American Revolution," i. 269–285, has given extracts from the American newspapers for July and August, 1776, describing the official and popular demonstrations in many of the States at the first reading of the Declaration.

proclaimed, "has had a glorious effect—has made these colonies all alive."[1] "With the Independency of the American States," said another political leader a few weeks later, "a new era in politics has commenced. Every consideration respecting the propriety or impropriety of a separation from Britain is now entirely out of the question. . . . Our future happiness or misery, therefore, as a people, will depend entirely upon ourselves."[2] Six years afterward, in a review of the whole struggle, a great American scholar expressed his sense of the relation of this document to it, by saying, that "into the monumental act of Independence," Jefferson had "poured the soul of the continent."[3]

Moreover, during the century and a quarter since the close of the Revolution, the influence of this state paper on the political character and the political conduct of the American people has been great beyond all calculation. For example, after we had achieved our own national deliverance, and had advanced into that enormous and somewhat corrupting material prosperity which followed the adoption of the constitution, the development of the cotton interest, and the expansion of the republic into a trans-continental power, we fell, as is now most apparent, under an appalling national temptation,—the temptation to forget, or to repudiate, or to refuse to apply to the case of our human brethren in bondage, the very principles which we ourselves had once proclaimed as the basis of every rightful government, and as the ultimate source of our own claim to an untrammeled national life. The prodigious service rendered to us in this awful moral emergency by the Declaration of Independence was, that its public repetition, at least once every year, in the hearing of vast throngs of the American

[1] William Whipple, of New Hampshire, in Force, "American Archives," 5th series, i. 368.

[2] Jonathan Elmer, of New Jersey, given in Moore, "Diary of the American Revolution," i. 279–280.

[3] Ezra Stiles, president of Yale College, in Connecticut election sermon, for 1783, p. 46.

people, in every portion of the republic, kept constantly before our minds, in a form of almost religious sanctity, those few great ideas as to the dignity of human nature, and the sacredness of personality, and the indestructible rights of man as mere man, with which we had so gloriously identified the beginnings of our national existence, and upon which we had proceeded to erect all our political institutions both for the nation and for the States. It did, indeed, at last become very hard for us to listen each year to the preamble of the Declaration of Independence, and still to remain the owners and users and catchers of slaves; still harder, to accept the doctrine that the righteousness and prosperity of slavery was to be taken as the dominant policy of the nation. The logic of Calhoun was as flawless as usual, when he concluded that the chief obstruction in the way of his system, was the preamble of the Declaration of Independence. Had it not been for the inviolable sacredness given by it to those sweeping aphorisms about the natural rights of man, it may be doubted whether, under the vast practical inducements involved, Calhoun might not have succeeded in winning over an immense majority of the American people to the support of his compact and plausible scheme for making slavery the basis of the republic. It was the preamble of the Declaration of Independence which elected Lincoln, which sent forth the Emancipation Proclamation, which gave victory to Grant, which ratified the Thirteenth Amendment.

Moreover, we cannot doubt that the permanent effects of the great Declaration on the political and even the ethical ideals of the American people are wider and deeper than can be measured by our experience in grappling with any single political problem; for they touch all the spiritual springs of American national character, and they create, for us and for all human beings, a new standard of political justice and a new principle in the science of government. "Much ridicule, a little of it not altogether undeserved," says a brilliant English scholar of our time, who is also

nobly distinguished in the sphere of English statesmanship, "has been thrown upon the opening clause of the Declaration of Independence, which asserts the inherent natural right of man to enjoy life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety. Yet there is an implied corollary in this which enjoins the highest morality that in our present state we are able to think of as possible. If happiness is the right of our neighbor, then not to hinder him but to help him in its pursuit, must plainly be our duty. If all men have a claim, then each man is under an obligation. The corollary thus involved is the corner-stone of morality. It was an act of good augury thus to inscribe happiness as entering at once into the right of all, and into the duty of all, in the very head and front of the new charter, as the base of a national existence, and the first principle of a national government. The omen has not been falsified. The Americans have been true to their first doctrine. They have never swerved aside to set up caste and privilege, to lay down the doctrine that one man's happiness ought to be an object of greater solicitude to society than any other man's, or that one order should be encouraged to seek its prosperity through the depression of any other order. Their example proved infectious. The assertion in the New World, that men have a right to happiness and an obligation to promote the happiness of one another, struck a spark in the Old World. Political construction in America immediately preceded the last violent stage of demolition in Europe." [1]

We shall not here attempt to delineate the influence of this state paper upon mankind in general. Of course, the emergence of the American Republic as an imposing world-power is a phenomenon which has now for many years attracted the attention of the human race. Surely, no slight effect must have resulted from the fact that, among all civilized peoples, the one American document best known, is

[1] John Morley, "Edmund Burke: A Historical Study," 161–162.

the Declaration of Independence,[1] and that thus the spectacle of so vast and beneficent a political success has been everywhere associated with the assertion of the natural rights of man. "The doctrines it contained," says Buckle, "were not merely welcomed by a majority of the French nation, but even the government itself was unable to withstand the general feeling."[2] "Its effect in hastening the approach of the French Revolution . . . was indeed most remarkable."[3] Elsewhere, also, in many lands, among many peoples, it has been appealed to again and again as an inspiration for political courage, as a model for political conduct; and if, as the brilliant English historian just cited has affirmed, "that noble Declaration . . . ought to be hung up in the nursery of every king, and blazoned on the porch of every royal palace,"[4] it is because it has become the classic statement of political truths which must at last abolish kings altogether, or else teach them to identify their existence with the dignity and happiness of human nature.

IX.

It would be unfitting, in a work like the present, to treat of the Declaration of Independence without making more than an incidental reference to its purely literary character.

Very likely, most writings—even most writings of genuine and high quality—have had the misfortune of being read too little. There is, however, a misfortune—perhaps, a greater misfortune—which has overtaken some literary compositions, and these not necessarily the noblest and the best,—the misfortune of being read too much. At any rate, the writer of a piece of literature which has been neglected, need not be refused the consolation he may get from reflecting that he is, at least, not the writer of a piece of literature which has become hackneyed. Just this is the

[1] The editor of the latest edition of "The Writings of Thomas Jefferson," i. Introd. xxv., does not shrink from calling it "the paper which is probably the best known that ever came from the pen of an individual."

[2] "History of Civilization in England," 846. [3] Ibid. 847. [4] Ibid. 846.

sort of calamity which seems to have befallen the Declaration of Independence. Is it, indeed, possible for us Americans, near the close of the nineteenth century, to be entirely just to the literary quality of this most monumental document—this much belauded, much bespouted, much beflouted document ?—since, in order to be so, we need to rid ourselves, if we can, of the obstreperous memories of a lifetime of Independence Days, and to unlink and disperse the associations which have somehow confounded Jefferson's masterpiece with the rattle of fire-crackers, with the flash and the splutter of burning tar-barrels, and with that unreserved, that gyratory and perspiratory, eloquence now for more than a hundred years consecrated to the return of our fateful Fourth of July.

Had the Declaration of Independence been, what many a revolutionary state paper is, a clumsy, verbose, and vaporing production, not even the robust literary taste and the all-forgiving patriotism of the American people could have endured the weariness, the nausea, of hearing its repetition, in ten thousand different places, at least once every year, for so long a period. Nothing which has not supreme literary merit has ever triumphantly endured such an ordeal, or ever been subjected to it. No man can adequately explain the persistent fascination which this state-paper has had, and which it still has, for the American people, or for its undiminished power over them, without taking into account its extraordinary literary merits—its possession of the witchery of true substance wedded to perfect form :—its massiveness and incisiveness of thought, its art in the marshaling of the topics with which it deals, its symmetry, its energy, the definiteness and limpidity of its statements,[1] its exqui-

[1] Much has been said of the generalities, whether glittering or otherwise, of the Declaration ; yet they who have most objected to its teachings seem to have found them sufficiently specific and distinct. Its famous assertion that "all men are created equal," has been complained of as liable to be misconstrued ; "but," as a recent biographer of Jefferson cleverly says, "no intelligent man has ever misconstrued it, except intentionally." John T. Morse, Jr., "Thomas Jefferson," 40.

site diction—at once terse, musical, and electrical; and, as an essential part of this literary outfit, many of those spiritual notes which can attract and enthrall our hearts,—veneration for God, veneration for man, veneration for principle, respect for public opinion, moral earnestness, moral courage, optimism, a stately and noble pathos, finally, self-sacrificing devotion to a cause so great as to be herein identified with the happiness, not of one people only, or of one race only, but of human nature itself.

Upon the whole, this is the most commanding and the most pathetic utterance, in any age, in any language, of national grievances and of national purposes; having a Demosthenic momentum of thought, and a fervor of emotional appeal such as Tyrtæus might have put into his war-songs. Indeed, the Declaration of Independence is a kind of war-song; it is a stately and a passionate chant of human freedom; it is a prose lyric of civil and military heroism. We may be altogether sure that no genuine development of literary taste among the American people in any period of our future history can result in serious misfortune to this particular specimen of American literature.

END OF VOLUME I.

THE LITERARY HISTORY

OF THE

AMERICAN REVOLUTION

SECOND PART

1776–1783

PREFACE.

FOR the two volumes composing the present work, the most natural point of separation has seemed to be the year 1776,—a fact properly enough recorded in the secondary dates placed on the title-page of each. Thus, the chief aim of the first volume is to trace the development of political discontent in the Anglo-American colonies from about the year 1763 until the year when that discontent culminated in the resolve for American Independence; while the chief aim of the second volume is to trace the development of the Revolutionary struggle under the altered conditions produced by this change in its object and in its character, and to go on with the tale until the year when American Independence was formally acknowledged by the British government.

Such, then, being the broad distinction between the two volumes, I have carefully adhered to it in the presentation of the great features needful to the consecutive story which I had to tell. Nevertheless, though the most of my materials have adjusted themselves readily to this scheme of historic bisection, the same is not the case with them all; and it has not surprised me to find that in the treatment of a

few great topics, I needed to give myself larger room and freer movement than would be possible under a rigorous conformity to the time-limits imposed by my general plan. Of course, the differentiation by dates between the first volume and the second, was intended merely for convenience; and whenever a subject could be presented more justly by being presented continuously and without any break in its connection with the Revolution, I have not hesitated to present it in that way. Accordingly, in the first volume, which really ends with 1776, I have permitted myself occasionally to move forward into the years following; even as in the second volume, which really begins with 1776, I have permitted myself still more frequently to move back into the years preceding, in order to gather up at once and to have before us in a single view all the parts of any subject which may so belong to the entire period of the Revolution as to refuse to be cut in two by a mere date in the middle of it.

M. C. T.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY,
19 July, 1897.

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I.

WHEN George Bancroft first set forth before the world, about the middle of the nineteenth century, the story of the great part taken by Samuel Adams in the American Revo-

lution, it seemed to be an attempt to raise a mighty reputation from the dead; for it had been the fate of this man to atone for the prodigious hold he had upon his contemporaries, by losing for awhile and almost altogether his hold upon posterity. Not even yet has the time come, when an adequate account of the significance of his career, whether as a man of affairs or as a man of letters, can be read without some suspicion of paradox and extravagance.

Samuel Adams was, indeed, a man of letters, but he was so only because he was above all things a man of affairs. Of literary art, in certain forms, he was no mean master: of literary art for art's sake, he was entirely regardless. He was perhaps the most voluminous political writer of his time in America, and the most influential political writer of his time in New England; but everything that he wrote was meant for a definite practical purpose, and nothing that he wrote seemed to have had any interest for him aside from that purpose. Accordingly, as has been said by his latest biographer, "like cannon balls which sink the ship, and then are lost in the sea, so the bolts of Samuel Adams, after riddling British authority in America, must be sought by diving beneath the oblivion that has rolled over them." [1]

Deep as is the obscurity which has fallen upon his literary services in the cause of the Revolution, the fame of those services was, at the time of them, almost unrivaled by that of any other writer, at least in the colonies east of the Hudson River. So early as the year 1765, John Adams spoke of him, among a group of brilliant and accomplished men, as having "the most correct, genteel, and artful pen" of any of them.[2] In the year 1774, he again pointed out Samuel Adams as "the most elegant writer" who had figured

[1] James Kendall Hosmer, "Samuel Adams," 360. This is one of the volumes in the "American Statesmen" series, and for thoroughness, fairness, and suggestiveness, one of the best. It is especially remarkable for a certain delicate insight into character, and for its candor and justice toward both parties in the American Revolution,—thus heralding the new age of American historical writing.

[2] "The Works of John Adams," ii. 163.

in America in his time.[1] In the year 1768, James Otis, with his usual amplitude of assertion, publicly declared "that there was not a person in England capable of composing so elegant, so pure, and so nervous a writing," as a certain state paper by Samuel Adams then recently given to the public.[2] The one man among his contemporaries who had the most occasion to know and to dread the literary skill of Samuel Adams, bore witness to the fact that, though he was at first but an indifferent writer, yet "long practice caused him to arrive at great perfection, and to acquire a talent of artfully and fallaciously insinuating into the minds of his readers a prejudice against the character of all whom he attacked, beyond any other man I ever knew."[3] "Damn that Adams," groaned Governor Bernard; "every dip of his pen stings like a horned snake."[4] A Loyalist writer in the year 1775 spoke facetiously of Samuel Adams as "a sachem of vast elocution," and then added with more seriousness,—"what proceeds from the mouth of Adams, is sufficient to fill the mouths of millions in America."[5]

II.

Born in Boston in 1722, graduated at Harvard in 1740, he early showed an invincible passion and aptitude for politics. Though both orthodox and devout, he was disinclined to the ministry. Though fond of the discussion of politico-legal questions, he was easily dissuaded from the study of the law. Enrolled as a merchant's clerk in his native town, he had no difficulty, after a brief apprenticeship, in securing

[1] William Vincent Wells, "The Life and Public Services of Samuel Adams," i. 446.

[2] "Letters to the Ministry from Governor Bernard," 40. The state paper here referred to, is the petition to the king passed by the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1768.

[3] Thomas Hutchinson, "The History of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay," iii. 295.

[4] "The Works of John Adams," ii. 425–426.

[5] Thomas Bolton, "Oration," Boston, March 15, 1775. Cited in Wells, "The Life and Public Services of Samuel Adams," ii. 410 n.

a release from his employer, who naïvely explained that young Adams "would never do for a merchant," as "his whole soul was engrossed by politics."[1] Having been by his father set up in trade, with a capital of a thousand pounds, he proved himself to be so much more apt at parting with his goods than at getting pay for them, that he soon had nothing left of what his father had given him. Being then taken as a partner into his father's business—that of a brewer—and being upon his father's death in 1758 made his successor in the business, he continued to concern himself so much with the affairs of the state house and so little with those of the malt house, that even the petty revenue to be derived from the office of tax collector for the town of Boston,—an office which he held from 1756 to 1764,—became a matter of convenience to him.[2]

In the meantime, the man whom his enemies had already nicknamed "Samuel the Maltster," and "Samuel the Publican," was far advanced in that line of activity which subsequently earned for him the additional titles of "Arch-Manager," "Man of the Town Meeting," "Father of Democracy," "Grand Incendiary," "Cromwell of New England," and "Man of the Revolution." The one title, however, which perhaps best describes him, as being free alike from sarcasm and from panegyric, is one which seems never to have been given to him—that of Citizen. It was simply as a citizen—it was in the exercise of the rights and duties of the free and fearless civic character—that he found his true vocation. Moreover, under the peculiar conditions of his time, the most important function of citizenship seemed to him to be that of criticism, opposition, destruction. For precisely that function he was supremely endowed,—he was the incomparable leader of his fellow-citizens in the development of astute, far-reaching, and masterly measures of destructive statesmanship. At the

[1] Wells, "Life of S. Adams," i. 12.

[2] The old and oft-repeated charge that Adams was a peculator in this office, has been disproved by A. C. Goodell, "Proc. of Mass. Hist. Soc.," xx. 213–223.

moment when the business of constructive statesmanship became the chief function in the emancipated commonwealth, the work of Samuel Adams was done.[1]

Even his thrifty fellow-townsmen, who perhaps nodded their heads at his thriftless ways in all matters pertaining to his own business, could not fail to note his singular appetence for the business of the public—his readiness to think and write and speak and plot and otherwise to toil, in order that the interests of the public should receive no harm. And nothing that affected the public interests was too inconsiderable for him to engage in—if the public so desired. In the records of the town of Boston—as we are told by a writer[2] who has turned them over with this subject in view—one finds the name of Samuel Adams so early as 1753 as a patient plodder in town business; and "scarcely a year passes from that date until the town meetings cease, crushed out by the battalions of Gage, when his name does not appear in connections becoming constantly more honorable," —from membership of committees to see that chimneys are properly inspected, and that precautions are taken against the spread of small-pox, to membership of committees to instruct the town's representatives in the assembly. Finally, in September, 1765, in the fever-heat of opposition to the Stamp Act, he himself became one of the town's representatives in the assembly; and from about that time, until 1774, when he was sent to represent Massachusetts in the Continental Congress, he was the real director of the policy of opposition in the eastern colonies.[3] In the assembly of Massachusetts no other member could rival him in minute knowledge of the rules and business of the house, in laborious devotion to its work, in steadiness, endurance, tact, shrewdness, persuasiveness, and in the not very noble art of manipulating committees and caucuses; and while some other men—notably James Otis and John Adams—were far

[1] Wells, "Life of S. Adams," ii. 466.
[2] Hosmer, "Samuel Adams," 36.
[3] Wells, "Life of S. Adams," i. 98.

more brilliant in debate, not even their dashing and dazzling speeches could win votes as did the brief, unadorned, informing, and convincing talks of Samuel Adams.

III.

It is easy to see, also, that his political influence was vastly increased by the evident purity of his character, his disinterestedness as to pecuniary gain, and his unassuming ways. He began to illustrate democratic simplicity and democratic friendliness, long before Jefferson was old enough to know the meaning of those words. Seated on a log by the side of some caulker in the shipyard, or pausing on a street corner for leisurely and confidential discourse with any cobbler or hod carrier who should care to spend his time in that way, he won extraordinary affection from his fellow-townsmen by his evident willingness to impart to the humblest of them the political fears, and hopes, and aims, which possessed his own soul respecting the commonwealth. In his concern for the interests of the public, he was "forgetful of the ordinary pursuits which occupy the minds of men. . . . He was truly and really contented with poverty"[1]; so that, in his old age, he could say, proudly, that "a guinea had never glistened in his eyes."[2] Abstemious, untiring, unswerving, he seemed never to care who had the credit of his measures—if only his measures had success. "He eats little," wrote his chief antagonist in the Congress of 1774, "drinks little, sleeps little, thinks much, and is most decisive and indefatigable in the pursuit of his objects."[3] So great became his ascendency over the people, that, as one of his biographers declares, "in the stormiest days preceding the outbreak of the war, it was common among the vulgar and uneducated to assert that he was actually gifted with prophecy, and not a few believed that he held peace or war in his keeping."[4] In 1771,

[1] Wells, "Life of S. Adams," i. 272. [2] Ibid. ii. 195.
[3] Galloway, "Historical and Political Reflections," etc., 67.
[4] Wells, "Life of S. Adams," ii. 241.

Hutchinson reprobated this Boston politician as "an incendiary equal to any at present in London."[1] Two years afterward, in a private letter to Lord Dartmouth, Hutchinson explained at length the methods by which Samuel Adams had made himself so powerful and so dangerous: "Whenever there appears a disposition to any conciliatory measures, this person, by his art and skill, prevents any effect; sometimes by exercising his talents in the newspapers; . . . at other times by an open opposition, and this sometimes in the house, where he has defeated every attempt as often as any has been made. But his chief dependence is upon a Boston town meeting, where he originates his measures, which are followed of course by the rest of the towns, and of course are adopted or justified by the assembly."[2] By the year 1774, his reputation had become so great in England that, according to Josiah Quincy, many people there considered him "the first politician in the world."[3] It was not without reason that in the royal offers of amnesty to the American rebels in case of their repentance, no place for repentance was left for one who was probably the first to avow the doctrine of American Independence, and who, next to the British ministry itself, was probably the most influential in securing its adoption. Even though a disinterested student may abate somewhat from the extreme assertions made on his behalf by recent eulogists of Samuel Adams, it is a clear token of the immense influence he had upon political and military events in America, especially between 1765 and 1776, that it is now possible for reasonable men to claim for him that he was the first to deny all legislative authority of parliament over the colonies, as well as the first to suggest the leading measures made necessary by such denial,—intercolonial union, committees of correspondence, circular letters, the league for non-importation, and the establishment of an incipient

[1] Wells, "Life of S. Adams," i. 398.

[2] Quoted in Wells, "Life of S. Adams," ii. 100.

[3] Josiah Quincy, "Memoir of the Life of Josiah Quincy, Junior," 258.

national government under the title of the Continental Congress. Surely, of one who had an initial and a necessary part in the creation of a series of political devices so thorough-going and so epoch-making as were these, it is not altogether an extravagance to say—as has been said in our day by a masterly critic of those times—that, "in the history of the American Revolution," Samuel Adams "is second only to Washington." [1]

IV.

It comports with the particular purpose of this book, to direct attention to the fact that one principal instrument by means of which Samuel Adams so greatly molded public opinion, and shaped political and even military procedure, was the pen. Of modern politicians, he was among the first to recognize the power of public opinion in directing public events, and likewise the power of the newspaper in directing public opinion. It was, therefore, an essential part of his method as a politician to acquire and to exercise the art of literary statement in a form suited to that particular end. He had the instinct of a great journalist, and of a great journalist willing to screen his individuality behind his journal. In this service, it was not Samuel Adams that Samuel Adams cared to put and to keep before the public, —it was the ideas of Samuel Adams. Accordingly, of all American writers for the newspapers between the years 1754 and 1776, he was perhaps the most vigilant, the most industrious, the most effective, and also the least identified. Ever ready to efface himself in what he did, he realized that the innumerable productions of his pen would make their way to a far wider range of readers, and would be all the more influential, if they seemed to be the work, not of one writer, but of many. Therefore, he almost never published anything under his own name; but, under a multitude of

[1] John Fiske, quoted by Hosmer in "Samuel Adams," as one of the mottoes on the obverse side of the leaf containing the dedication.

titular disguises which no man has yet been able to number, —as "Alfred," "An American," "A Bostonian," "A Tory," "A Chatterer," "A Son of Liberty," "An Imperialist," "An Elector in 1771," "Valerius Poplicola," "A.," "A. B.," "E. A.," "Z.," "T. Z.," "Candidus," "Determinatus," "Sincerus," "Populus," "Cedant Arma Togæ," "Principiis Obsta," "A Religious Politician," "A Layman," "Observation," "Shippen,"—this sleepless, crafty, protean politician, for nearly a third of a century, kept flooding the community with his ideas, chiefly in the form of essays in the newspapers,—thereby constantly baffling the enemies of the Revolutionary movement, and conducting his followers victoriously through those battles of argument which preceded and then for a time accompanied the battles of arms. "Some of his essays over one signature extend, in consecutive series, through several years,—the argument being maintained right and left with his various Loyalist assailants,—while, with different names, he kept up contests simultaneously with others of the crown writers on distinct subjects. All this time his pen was employed on the state papers of the legislature and other public bodies, and in his extensive correspondence with patriots in the other colonies and with gentlemen in England. . . . If published entire, together with the arguments of his antagonists, they would present a formidable array of controversial papers, embracing all the issues between Great Britain and the colonies, and showing the gradual progress of events which culminated in American Independence."[1]

V.

In the long line of his state papers—the official utterances of the several public bodies with which he was connected and which so long trusted him as their most deft and unerring penman—one may now trace, almost without a break, the development of the ideas and the measures which formed

[1] Wells, "Life of S. Adams," i. 445 n.

the Revolution. It was he who drafted, both in 1764 and in 1765, the instructions of the town of Boston to its representatives in the assembly[1]; and in October, 1775, the assembly's answer to the governor's speech[2]; and in 1768, the assembly's petition to the king, the assembly's letters to the chief members of the British ministry,[3] the assembly's letter of instructions to its agent in London,[4] and the assembly's circular letter to the legislatures of the other colonies[5]; in 1769, the remonstrance of the house of representatives to the governor,[6] and the "Appeal to the World," sent forth by the town-meeting of Boston[7]; in 1772, Boston's statement of the "Natural Rights of the Colonists as Men"[8]; in 1773, the two answers of the house of representatives to the governor's speech on the authority of parliament,[9] and the circular letter of the town of Boston to all its sister towns in Massachusetts[10]; in 1774, the circular letter of the town of Boston and of its nearest neighbors to the committees of correspondence throughout all the colonies[11]; in 1775, the address of the Continental Congress to the Mohawk Indians[12]; in 1776, the resolves of Congress for the disarmament of the Tories[13]; in 1778, the manifesto of congress against the barbarities practised by their enemies in the conduct of the war[14]; in 1779, an important portion of the new constitution of the State of Massachusetts, particularly the bill of rights,[15] together with the address of the constitutional convention to the people of Massachusetts.[16]

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[1] Wells, "Life of S. Adams," i. 46 and 65. [2] Ibid. 71 n.

[3] These letters, together with the petition to the king, were printed the same year in London, by Almon, under a title which became celebrated—"The True Sentiments of America."

[4] Wells, "Life of S. Adams," i. 152–158. [5] Ibid. 170. [6] Ibid. 255–256.

[7] Ibid. 282. [8] Ibid. 502–504. [9] Ibid., ii. 29, 31 n. [10] Ibid. 108–109.

[11] Ibid. 157–158. [12] Ibid. 282–284. [13] Ibid. 364–366.

[14] Idid. iii. 46–47.

[15] Ibid. 80–89. Where it is argued that too much has been claimed for John Adams and too little for Samuel Adams as to the authorship of this important document. [16] Ibid. 90–96.

If we take into account the strain of thought and of emotional energy involved in all these years of fierce political controversy and of most perilous political leadership, we shall hardly fear to overestimate the resources of Samuel Adams in his true career of agitator and iconoclast;—especially the elasticity, the toughness, the persistence of a nature which could, in addition to all this, undertake and carry through, during the same long period, all the work he did in literary polemics,—work which alone might seem enough to employ and tire the strength even of a strong man who had nothing else to do. Some glimpse of the secret of his strength, and of his actual method while engaged in the forging of his politico-literary thunderbolts, is given us through a vivid picture of him as drawn by his great-grandson: "Frugal and temperate in his habits, his wants were few, and his powers of endurance fitted him for ceaseless industry. Most of his public papers were written in a study or library adjoining his bedroom; and his wife, after his death, related how, in the stillness of the night, she used, in the Revolutionary times, to listen to the incessant motion of the pen in the next room, whence the solitary lamp, which lighted the patriot in his labors, was dimly visible. Mr. Joseph Pierce, who personally knew Samuel Adams, and whose business obliged him for a long time to pass after midnight by the house, related, early in the present century, that he seldom failed to see the study lighted, no matter how far the night had gone, 'and he knew that Sam Adams was hard at work writing against the Tories.'"[1]

The traits of Samuel Adams the writer are easily defined —for they are likewise the traits of Samuel Adams the politician, and of Samuel Adams the man. His fundamental rule for literary warfare was this—"Keep your enemy in the wrong."[2] His style, then, was the expression of his intellectual wariness,—a wariness like that of the scout or the bush-whacker, who knows that behind any tree

[1] Wells, "Life of S. Adams," i. 202–203.

[2] Ibid. 447.

may lurk his deadly foe, that a false step may be his ruin, that a badly-aimed shot may make it impossible for him ever to shoot again. Jefferson, who first became aware of the intellectual quality of Samuel Adams as it came out in the debates of Congress, long afterward described him as "truly a great man, wise in council, fertile in resources, immovable in his purposes. . . . As a speaker he could not be compared with his living colleague and namesake, whose deep conceptions, nervous style, and undaunted firmness, made him truly our bulwark in debate. But Mr. Samuel Adams, although not of fluent elocution, was so rigorously logical, so clear in his views, abundant in good sense, and master always of his subject, that he commanded the most profound attention whenever he rose in an assembly by which the froth of declamation was heard with the most sovereign contempt." [1]

Whether in oral or in written speech, his characteristics were the same,—simplicity, acuteness, logical power, and strict adaptation of means to the practical end in view. Nothing was for effect—everything was for effectiveness. He wrote pure English, and in a style severe, felicitous, pointed, epigrammatic. Careful as to facts, disdainful of rhetorical excesses, especially conscious of the strategic folly involved in mere overstatement, an adept at implication and at the insinuating light stroke, he had never anything to take back or to apologize for. In the wearisome fondness of his century for Greek and Roman analogies, he shared to the full; and in a less degree, in its passion for the tags and gew-gaws of classical quotation. Of course, his style bears the noble impress of his ceaseless and reverent reading of the English Bible. To a mere poet, he seldom alludes. Among secular writers of modern times, his days and nights were given, as occasion served, to Hooker, Coke, Grotius, Locke, Sidney, Vattel, Montesquieu, Blackstone, and Hume.

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[1] "The Writings of Thomas Jefferson," H. A. Washington ed., vii. 126.

VI.

Perhaps no long public career was ever more perfectly self-consistent than his. From boyhood to old age, his master principle was individualism. As an undergraduate in college, having occasion to choose a subject for a public discussion, he revealed the bent of his mind by taking that of "Liberty."[1] In 1743, for his master's degree at Harvard, he wrote a Latin thesis on the affirmative side of the question,—"Whether it be lawful to resist the Supreme Magistrate, if the Commonwealth cannot be otherwise preserved,"[2]—a mettlesome doctrine, which, as his latest biographer has graphically said, "he proceeded to discuss in the presence, not only of the college dignitaries, but of the new governor, Shirley, and the crown officials, who sat in state near the young speakers at commencement, as do their successors to-day. . . . No one knew that as the young man spoke, then, for the first time, one of the great Revolutionary group was asserting the right of resistance by the people to arbitrary oppressors. Shirley was perhaps lost in some far-away dream of how he might get at the French; and when thirty years after, in his retirement at Dorchester, he asked who the Sam Adams could be that was such a thorn in the side to his successors Bernard and Hutchinson, he was quite unconscious of the fact that he himself had had the benefit, close at hand, of the first scratch."[3]

From the day of his graduation till his work as a political writer was done, he did but play variations on this robust doctrine and its corollaries. Men shall be talking much of liberty—no one more than he; but what is liberty? Broadly, it is a something which distinguishes "a society of wise and reasonable creatures from the brutal herd, where the strong-

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[1] Wells, "Life of S. Adams," i. 6.

[2] Ibid. 10. "An supremo Magistratui resistere liceat, si aliter servari Respublica nequit? Affirmat respondens Samuel Adams."

[3] Hosmer, "Samuel Adams," 17–18.

est horns are the strongest laws."[1] "The perfection of liberty, . . . in a state of nature, is for every man to be free from any external force, and to perform such actions as in his own mind and conscience he judges to be rightest; which liberty no man can truly possess whose mind is enthralled by irregular and inordinate passions,—since it is no great privilege to be free from external violence, if the dictates of the mind are controlled by a force within which exerts itself above reason."[2] As "no man's life is his own in such a sense as that he may wantonly destroy it at his own pleasure, or submit it to the wanton pleasure of another, so neither is his liberty."[3] "But, alas! in this exalted sense, liberty is rather admired in the world than truly enjoyed. What multitudes of persons are there who have not so much as the shadow of it; who hold their property and even their lives by no other tenure than the sovereign will of a tyrant, and he often the worst and most detestable of men, who, to gratify the least humor or passion in his nature, does not scruple to massacre them by thousands!"[4]

So, too, in his time, men shall be talking much of loyalty —others, perhaps, much more than he. But what is loyalty? According to Samuel Adams, it is "the beauty and perfection of a well-constituted state. It cannot, indeed, subsist in an arbitrary government, because it is founded in the love and possession of liberty. It includes in it a thorough knowledge of our constitution, its conveniences and defects as well as its real advantages; a becoming jealousy of our immunities, and a steadfast resolution to maintain them. It delights in the quiet and thankful enjoyment of a good administration, and it is the scourge of the griping oppressor and haughty invader of our liberties."[5] "Whoever, therefore, insinuates notions of government contrary to the constitution, or in any way winks at any measures to suppress or even to weaken it, is not a loyal man."[6]

[1] Wells, "Life of S. Adams," i. 19. This book is the best repository we have of the writings of Samuel Adams.

[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid. 20. [5] Ibid. 16. [6] Ibid. 17.

"Whoever acquaints us that we have no right to examine into the conduct of those who, though they derive their power from us to serve the common interests, make use of it to impoverish and ruin us, is, in a degree, a rebel—to the undoubted rights and liberties of the people." [1]

These definitions, put forth by Samuel Adams when he was but twenty-six years of age—seventeen years before the Stamp Act, twenty-eight years before the Declaration of Independence—mark the solidity and the clarity of the foundation which he thus early laid for that system of stalwart political philosophy which he was to continue to teach during all those years of storm and stress wherein he served as the inspirer and leader of his people. Moreover, while keeping full in view that side both of liberty and of loyalty which points toward rights, he did not forget that for both there was a side which points toward duties. "It is not unfrequent," said he, "to hear men declaim loudly upon liberty, who, if we may judge by the whole tenor of their actions, mean nothing else by it but their own liberty, — to oppress, without control or the restraint of laws, all who are poorer or weaker than themselves." [2] "He that despises his neighbor's happiness because he wears a worsted cap or leather apron, he that struts immeasurably above the lower size of people, and pretends to adjust the rights of men by the distinctions of fortune, is not over loyal." [3] Nor did Samuel Adams, like some other speculative democrats of that age, content himself with being a democrat chiefly in theory: his theory of democracy was also the gentle and faithful practice of his life. Not only were the lowliest and most helpless people made to feel in his presence that they were his brethren, but no man, no woman, however lowly and helpless, could be his slave. When one day, a full decade before the Declaration of Independence, his wife told him of the valuable present of a slave-girl she had just received, he said to her:

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[1] Wells, "Life of S. Adams," i. 17. [2] Ibid. 22. [3] Ibid. 17.

"A slave cannot live in my house: if she comes, she must be free."[1] And free she was.

VII.

On no other topic of the Revolution was his writing more trenchant or more characteristic, than on that of the due subordination of the military power,—a topic which to Americans became peculiarly interesting about the time of the entrance of the British regiments into the town of Boston in 1768. "Military power," said he at that time, "is by no means calculated to convince the understandings of men. It may in another part of the world affright women and children, and perhaps some weak men, out of their senses, but will never awe a sensible American tamely to surrender his liberty."[2] "Are we a garrisoned town, or are we not? If we are, let us know by whose authority and by whose influence we are made so. If not—and I take it for granted we are not—let us then assert and maintain the honor, the dignity, of free citizens, and place the military where all other men are, and where they ought always and will be placed in every free country,—at the foot of the common law of the land! To submit to the civil magistrate in the legal exercise of power, is forever the part of a good subject; and to answer the watchmen of the town in the night, may be the part of a good citizen, as well as to afford them all necessary countenance and support. But to be called to account by a common soldier, or any soldier, is a badge of slavery which none but a slave will wear."[3]

In 1773, in view of the colossal blunders in statesmanship presented by the farcical and galling policy of the British king and ministry, he wrote: "That Great Britain should continue to insult and alienate the growing millions who inhabit this country, on whom she greatly depends, and on whose alliance in future time her existence as a nation may be suspended, is perhaps as glaring an instance of human

[1] Wells, "Life of S. Adams," i. 138. [2] Ibid. 233. [3] Ibid. 231.

folly as ever disgraced politicians or put common sense to the blush."[1] In 1774, in the midst of the labors of the first Continental Congress, he published these words of stern meaning: "If the British administration and government do not return to the principles of moderation and equity, the evil which they profess to aim at preventing by their rigorous measures, will the sooner be brought to pass, namely, the entire separation and independence of the colonies."[2] "I wish for a permanent union with the mother country, but only on the terms of liberty and truth. No advantage that can accrue to America from such an union, can compensate for the loss of liberty."[3] In February, 1776, when, in his opinion, no choice was left to Americans but that between servitude under Great Britain and separation from her, he wrote: "I account a state a moral person, having an interest and will of its own; and I think that state a monster whose prime mover has an interest and will in direct opposition to its prosperity and security."[4]

VIII.

Another example of the American statesman who, while weighted with the responsibilities of political leadership, had also the aptitude and the inclination for much work as a writer in the political journals, was William Livingston, a member of the Continental Congress from 1774 to 1776, for a short time in the latter year a brigadier-general in command of the militia of New Jersey, and from August, 1776, until his death in July, 1790, governor of that State by repeated choice of its people.[5] A positive, aggressive, rugged man, with Scottish fire and Scottish tenacity, a good lover, a good hater, the robustness of his temper streaked with veins of humor, imagination, and tender-

[1] Wells, "Life of S. Adams," ii. 91.
[2] Ibid. 149.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid. 363.
[5] Of the character of William Livingston, I have treated more fully in my "History of American Literature during the Colonial Time," ii. 218–223, where also will be found an account of his literary work prior to the Revolution.

ness, a considerable student of books, a poet, an orator,[1] an essayist, a satirist, he was noted throughout the last seven years of the Revolutionary period for the gusty vigor with which he governed his little commonwealth, organized, sustained, and spurred on her soldiers, and to the military warfare against the enemy added a most vivacious literary warfare—bombarding them through the newspapers with intermittent showers of shot and shell in the form of arguments, anathemas, jokes, and jeers. To have a rough and ready part in that species of warfare, was indeed an old habit and passion of his life: and after many a noisy and smoky word-battle with his antagonists in the later colonial days, it was quite impossible for him to refrain from entering, in a similar manner, into the more deadly disputes of the Revolution.

Undoubtedly, a considerable number of his contributions to the Revolutionary newspapers are now wholly beyond identification. In "The Pennsylvania Packet" for February 18, 1777, is to be seen a well-certified and a most typical specimen of his work, entitled "The Impartial Chronicle, or the Infallible Intelligencer: upon the Plan and after the Manner of the New York Mercury,"[2]—the same being a droll and an effective burlesque on the alleged imaginativeness and mendacity of the Loyalist, Hugh Gaine, as a purveyor of political and military news. In December, 1777, being then in need of a literary organ within his own dominions, he gave his powerful aid to the establishment of "The New Jersey Gazette," conducted by Isaac Collins; and under his favorite pseudonym of "Hortensius," Livingston wrote for this paper, especially during the first year of its existence, some of the most telling articles it contained,[3]—such as the fol-

[1] In 1776, as governor of New Jersey, Livingston addressed the legislature of that State in a speech, which was declared by John Adams to be "the most elegant and masterly ever made in America." "Letters of John Adams, Addressed to His Wife," i. 168.

[2] Reprinted in 1789 by Mathew Carey in "The American Museum," v. 295–298; 371–374.

[3] T. Sedgwick, "Life of Livingston," 247–248.

lowing: "On the Exchange of Burgoyne,"[1] "On the Conquest of America,"[2] "A Satire on Sir William Howe,"[3] "To his Majesty of Great Britain,"[4] "Annotations on his most gracious Majesty's . . . most gracious Speech,"[5] "On Lord North's Speech,"[6] "On Reunion with Great Britain,"[7] and "On the British Commissioners."[8] No modern reader of these essays is likely to regard Theodore Sedgwick's praise of them as excessive when he declares that, "combining eloquent appeals to the patriotism of the colonists, with the most scoffing ridicule of the menaces and denunciations of the British, they by turns enlisted every feeling which can arm the breasts of individuals or nations against vacillation and fear."[9] During a part of the year 1779, this tireless disputant lent the help of his slashing pen to the columns of "The United States Magazine," published at Philadelphia under the editorship of Hugh Henry Brackenridge.[10]

It is a somewhat droll fact that, in the very midst of these versatile and quickening efforts for the great cause, he was suddenly persuaded to desist from them altogether, in consequence, it is said, of open objections made by members of the New Jersey legislature,—they deeming it an indecorum for their chief-magistrate to be a partisan scribbler in the newspapers.[11] At any rate, his literary services to the Revolution had such vindication as could be furnished by the superabounding hatred of himself with which they inspired the enemy. "My good friends in New York," he said in 1778 in a letter to Henry Laurens, "have faithfully promised to cut my throat for writing—which they seem to resent more than fighting."[12] In the meantime, however, and until his good friends in New York should find it convenient to accomplish their design upon him, they partially appeased their impatience by applying to him such flatter-

[1] Dec. 17, 1777. [2] Dec. 24, 1777. [3] Jan. 7, 1778. [4] Jan. 21, 1778.
[5] Feb. 11, 1778. [6] May 6, 1778. [7] Sept. 9, 1778. [8] Sept. 21, 1778.
[9] T. Sedgwick, "Life of Livingston," 249. [10] Ibid. 327.
[11] Ibid. 327–328. [12] Ibid. 280–281.

ing terms as "Spurious Governor," "Don Quixote of the Jerseys," "Despot-in-Chief in and over the rising State of New Jersey," "Itinerant Dey of New Jersey," "Knight of the most honorable Order of Starvation, and Chief of the Independents."[1] For a man like Livingston to be seriously disturbed by such missiles, was hardly probable: he himself in his day had fabricated and flung too many of them. As to the hope, so frankly avowed by the Loyalists, of wreaking physical vengeance upon him, it was not in Livingston's nature to refuse to them a reciprocation of the same cordial sentiment; for, at a time when the affairs of the Loyalists in New York seemed tumbling to ruin, he indicated his point of view respecting the chief of them, by saying in a letter to Gouverneur Morris: "If Rivington is taken, I must have one of his ears; Governor Clinton is entitled to the other; and General Washington, if he pleases, may take his head."[2]

[1] Sedgwick, "Life of Livingston," 247. [2] Ibid.

CHAPTER XXV.

JOHN DICKINSON AS PENMAN OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

I.—John Dickinson's ancestry and education—His early entrance into politics in Delaware and Pennsylvania—In the Stamp Act Congress—In the Continental Congress—Odium incurred in 1776 by his opposition to American Independence—His military services—Is driven into retirement—His return to Congress in 1779—Governor of Delaware in 1781, and of Pennsylvania in 1782.

II.—The brilliant talents and services which won for him the title of "Penman of the American Revolution"—As a writer of state papers—As a writer of political essays for the newspapers and of pamphlets, from 1762 to 1775.

III.—Having in Congress opposed the resolution for Independence, he joins the army to fight against the British—Both these acts entirely consistent with his avowed principles—By nature and training a conservative and a peace-maker—His hatred of violence and war—Believes that all difficulties between the colonies and the mother-country could be settled in a peaceful way—His characteristic method in controversy—He uses English principles with which to fight against English aggressions—His claim that the American opponents of the ministry are the true champions of English constitutional liberty—His efforts to avert war and revolution.

IV.—The blending of his influence as a political writer during the Revolution, with his influence as a politician—In 1767 he succeeds James Otis as our predominant political writer, as in 1776 he is succeeded by Thomas Paine—The great decline of Dickinson's influence in 1776—Fitted to lead in a constitutional controversy, but not in a revolutionary one—His method, also, too gentle for the later stage of the Revolution—He is regarded with contempt by more robust politicians—The injustice then done to his talents and character.

I.

THE year 1765, which is marked by the first contributions of John Dickinson to the literature of the American Revolution, presents him to us as an accomplished young barrister of Philadelphia, already noted for his large reading

in history and politics,[1] already noted for the purity and brilliance of his English style. He was born in 1732, on the eastern shore of Maryland, at Crosia-Doré,—an estate which even then for nearly a century had been the seat of the Dickinson family, as it still is after the lapse of a second century and more than the half of a third. Having been carefully educated by private tutors at home, he read law for three years in the office of John Moland of Philadelphia. In 1753, he was entered of the Middle Temple, London, where he resided for three years, having for fellow-students Edward Thurlowe, Lloyd Kenyon, and William Cowper. In 1760, he began his political career by taking a seat as member of the assembly of Delaware. In 1762, according to a usage then not uncommon, he was transferred to the assembly of Pennsylvania; and in that body he served with great distinction until 1765, and again from 1770 until the expiration of the colonial government in 1776. Moreover, in 1765 he represented Pennsylvania in the Stamp Act Congress, as he did also in the several sessions of the Continental Congress from 1774 until some time in July, 1776. Having, by his opposition to the proposal for American Independence, incurred the deep dislike and distrust of the more radical members of the party to which he belonged, he left his seat in Congress in order to take command of a brigade of Pennsylvania troops called out to aid in resisting the threatened attack of the British upon New York; and on the tenth of August, from his camp at Elizabethtown, New Jersey, he thus wrote to his friend, Charles Thomson, secretary of Congress: "The enemy are moving, and an attack on New York is quickly expected. As for myself, I can form no idea of a more noble fate than, after being the constant advocate for and promoter of every measure that could possibly lead to peace or prevent her

[1] William Rawle, the elder, wrote of Dickinson: "His law knowledge was respectable, although not remarkably extensive, for his attention was directed to historical and political studies." Charles Janeway Stillé, "The Life and Times of John Dickinson," 37.

return from being barred up; after cheerfully and deliberately sacrificing my popularity and all the emoluments I might certainly have derived from it, to principle; after suffering all the indignities that my countrymen now bearing rule are inclined, if they could, so plentifully to shower down upon my innocent head,—than willingly to resign my life, if Divine Providence shall please so to dispose of me, for the defense and happiness of those unkind countrymen whom I cannot forbear to esteem as fellow-citizens, amidst their fury against me."[1]

Notwithstanding the lofty principle upon which he thus acted, and the nobility of his devotion to the safety of his imperiled countrymen, he was pursued, even into the field of battle, by the enmity of his late associates, unable, as is apt to be the case with all revolutionary associates, to pardon the man who, having gone with them a part of the way, hesitated to go with them the whole of it. "I had not been ten days in camp at Elizabethtown," he wrote, "when I was by my persecutors turned out of Congress. While I was exposing my person to every hazard, and lodging every night within half a mile of the enemy, the members of the convention at Philadelphia, resting in quiet and safety, ignominiously voted me, as unworthy of my seat, out of the national senate."[2] By a studied insult, likewise, he was driven soon afterward to resign his commission in the army.[3] Upon his return to Pennsylvania, he served for a short time in its legislature, and then withdrew to an estate of his in Delaware, resolved to retire for awhile from all participation in politics, but to volunteer as a private soldier at the next call for troops.[4] In this capacity he carried a musket in the battle of Brandywine.[5] In May, 1779, he appeared once more in Congress, but as a member from Delaware, serving, however, only until the autumn of that year. In 1781, he was made governor of Delaware. In 1782, he was made governor of Pennsylvania, and as such

[1] Stillé, "Life of Dickinson," 202–203. [2] Ibid. 206.
[3] Ibid. [4] Ibid. 209. [5] Ibid. 214.

was serving the commonwealth at the close of the Revolution.[1]

II.

This is the man who, being thus occupied during all those years by great practical employments in peace and war, yet had such productiveness in literary labor and so exquisite a genius as to win for himself the title of "Penman of the American Revolution." By the author of a recent sketch of his life, he has been described as "the great colonial essayist."[2] By the editor of the latest edition of his writings, it has been claimed for him that, in the literature of the Revolution, he is "as preëminent as Washington in war, Franklin in diplomacy, and Morris in finance."[3]

No other man in those days had a finer gift for putting into form—into luminous, urbane, and stately form—the constitutional and political principles on which, in his opinion, the American opposition to the British ministry was to be conducted; and, prior to the middle of 1776, no other man was so much employed by the several public bodies with which he was connected, in giving expression to those principles in the great state papers of the time. It was he who, in 1765, drafted the "Resolutions in relation to the Stamp Act," adopted by the assembly of Pennsylvania, as well as the "Declaration of Rights," and the "Petition to the King," adopted by the Stamp Act Congress. It was he who, in July, 1774, wrote the "Resolves" promulgated by the convention of Pennsylvania; also, their "Instructions to the Representatives in Assembly," and their elaborate "Essay on the Constitutional Power of Great Britain over the Colonies in America." It was he who, in Octo-

[1] Both in Delaware and in Pennsylvania, the governor was then entitled president of the supreme executive council.

[2] Wharton Dickinson, in "The Magazine of American History," x. 223.

[3] Paul Leicester Ford, "The Writings of John Dickinson," i. Preface ix. This edition, which is to be included among the issues of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, is still in process of publication.

ber, 1774, wrote the "Address of Congress to the Inhabitants of the Province of Quebec" and the first "Petition of Congress to the King's Most Excellent Majesty." It was he who, in the early summer of 1775, wrote the second "Petition of Congress to the King's Most Excellent Majesty," as well as "The Declaration by the Representatives of the United Colonies of North America, now met in Congress at Philadelphia, setting forth the Causes and Necessity of their taking up Arms."[1] It was he who, in November, 1775, and again in June, 1776, wrote the "Instructions" of Pennsylvania to its representatives in Congress; who, in July, 1776, wrote the "Revision of the Bill of Rights" for the State of Pennsylvania; who, at about the same time, wrote the first draft of the "Articles of Confederation," as then submitted to Congress; who, finally, in May, 1779, wrote the "Address of Congress to the Several States on the Present Situation of Affairs."

But besides these imposing official expressions of the argument and sentiment of the American Revolution, John Dickinson likewise gave a more personal utterance to them, in almost innumerable ways, through the public press. During a period reaching back to at least three years prior to the Stamp Act, and reaching forward to at least one year subsequent to the Declaration of Independence, he was an almost constant writer of political essays for the newspapers, of broadsides, and of other fugitive productions,[2] the most of which, as he probably intended they

[1] The authorship of this powerful and noble paper has been somewhat in doubt, partly in consequence of the conflicting claims of Jefferson and Dickinson. The claim of Dickinson has, however, in recent years, been placed beyond question by George Henry Moore, an abstract of whose paper on the subject may be found in "The Magazine of American History," viii. 514–516. More adequate quotations from it are given by Stillé, "Life of Dickinson," Appendix iv. 353–364. The paper itself was printed in New York, 1890, and is entitled "John Dickinson, The Author of the Declaration on taking up arms in 1775." Also, "Jefferson's Writings," P. L. Ford ed., i. Introd. xxiv.; and 462–482.

[2] This, in substance, seems to be the opinion of the one man who, by his

should be, are now quite beyond the possibility of recognition. A mere glance at the list of his miscellaneous writings upon Revolutionary topics—so far as those writings are known to us—can hardly fail to give the reader a lively impression of the literary energy and versatility of the man, and of the vastness of the work he did during those tremendous years, in molding the opinions of his countrymen, and in conveying impulse and direction to events which have since acquired a world-wide celebrity and influence. Thus, in November,[1] 1765, he issued, as a broadside, a stirring "Address to Friends and Countrymen on the Stamp Act"; and this he reënforced by publishing in the following month a plausible and strong pamphlet, entitled "The Late Regulations respecting the British Colonies Considered." In 1766, under the signature of "A North American," he published "An Address to the Committee of Correspondence in Barbadoes,"—a paper bearing upon its title-page a sarcastic motto adapted, rather than precisely quoted, from Shakespeare[2]:

> "This word rebellion hath froze them up,
> Like fish in a pond."

On the second of December, 1767, in "The Pennsylvania Chronicle," he began the publication of a series of essays, which soon attained to a greater reputation, on both sides of the Atlantic, than had been reached by any previous production in American literature,—the "Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania," twelve in number, the last one appearing on the fifteenth of February, 1768.[3] In April of

special studies, is the most competent to give an opinion on the subject,—Mr. Paul Leicester Ford, to whose industry in research and to whose critical acumen we are indebted for the identification of a number of John Dickinson's writings hitherto unknown. "The Writings of John Dickinson," i. Pref. xi.

[1] The exact date is somewhat in doubt: the one here given is approximately correct.

[2] Second Part of King Henry IV., i. 1. This use among us of the word rebellion so early as the year 1766, is notable.

[3] A somewhat extended account of the "Farmer's Letters" and of their important effects, is given in chapter X. of this work.

that year, he published at Philadelphia "An Address read at a Meeting of Merchants to consider Non-Importation," —an appeal which three months later he supplemented by a "Letter" to the same merchants on the same subject. In July, 1768, he published "A Song for American Freedom," —a rather clumsy hymn of patriotic duty and enthusiasm, which, however, so perfectly fitted the needs and the moods of the friends of the Revolution that, in spite of its lack of poetic merit, it became, in all parts of the land, and down to the outbreak of hostilities, the most popular lyric produced among us during that period. In November, 1773, he published "Two Letters on the Tea-Tax." In May, 1774, he published "Letters to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies"—these letters being four in number. In December, 1775, he published a "Speech to the Assembly of New Jersey." In July, 1776, he published "An Essay for a Frame of Government in Pennsylvania."[1]

III.

To him who now reads that John Dickinson, having opposed in Congress the resolution for American Independence, immediately thereafter left that body in order to lead a brigade of American troops against the British, it will probably seem either that he had somewhat too suddenly repented of his opposition to Independence, or else that he was guilty of conduct inconsistent with his principles. Neither inference would be correct. In truth, his conduct throughout that particular emergency was in perfect accord with all his political teachings, which involved, especially, these two principles:—first, that it was the ancient and manly method of loyal Englishmen, in cases of extreme danger, to make demand for political rights with arms in

[1] In 1801, at Wilmington, Delaware, was published in two volumes, "The Political Writings of John Dickinson, Esq."

their hands, and even embodied in military array against the king's troops; and, secondly, that every citizen, having said and done his best to secure the prevalence of his own view, was bound to submit himself to the decision of the community to which he belonged, and help to carry it out. Indeed, no other American who finally supported the American Revolution in its ultimate issue—that of secession from the empire—exhibited, from first to last, a more perfect familiarity, or a more perfect sympathy, with the great historic precedents set by the English people in the management of fundamental controversies between subjects and their sovereign.

Both by nature and by culture, John Dickinson was a conservative, having an uncommon horror of all changes that violated the sequences of established law. His philosophy of politics was practical, rather than merely speculative: it was the product of an orderly and peace-loving mind, revering the dignity of human nature, familiar with political history, trained to the solution of legal problems by the maxims and methods of English law, and convinced that every dispute between man and man could better be settled by reason and by good humor, than by brute fury and brute force. In the alarming differences which had arisen between the American portion of the British empire and the sovereign power, he saw no difficulties which could not under such treatment be happily adjusted, if, indeed, both parties to the controversy sincerely desired them to be so adjusted. Accordingly, in all his writings, whether official or personal, his endeavor was to place the American claim on historic constitutional grounds—such as Englishmen at home must respect; to persuade all Americans, in the assertion of their rights, to be fearless and firm, as their English ancestors had always been under similar circumstances; to persuade both Americans and Englishmen that they were alike interested in a wise, just, and lasting settlement of this great dispute, and that, in its discussion, the exercise of amenity and of good humor would be of the

greatest use. Always he prefers to fight English oppression by English principles against oppression; to shew to the people of England, that it was their own rulers, and not the Americans, who were violating the constitution; and that the demands of the Americans, so far from being the spawn of a factious or revolutionary temper, were derived immediately from "the records, statutes, law-books, and most approved writers of our mother-country—those 'dead but most faithful counselors' (as Sir Edward Coke calls them) 'who cannot be daunted by fear, nor muzzled by affection, reward, or hope of preferment, and therefore may safely be believed.'"[1] "We well know," he wrote in 1774, "that the colonists are charged by many persons in Great Britain, with attempting to obtain . . . a total Independence on her. As well we know the accusation to be utterly false. . . . NOLUMBUS LEGES ANGLIÆ MUTARI. This is the rebellion with which we are stigmatized. We have committed the like offense, that was objected by the polite and humane Fimbria against a rude senator of his time: we have 'disrespectfully refused to receive the whole weapon into our body.' We could not do it, and—live; but that must be acknowledged to be a poor excuse, equally inconsistent with good breeding and the supreme legislature of Great Britain. For these ten years past, we have been incessantly attacked. Hard is our fate, when, to escape the character of rebels, we must be degraded into that of slaves; as if there was no medium between the two extremes of anarchy and despotism, where innocence and freedom could find repose and safety. Why should we be exhibited to mankind as a people adjudged by parliament unworthy of freedom? The thought alone is insupportable. Even those unhappy persons, who have had the misfortune of being born under the yoke of bondage . . . no sooner breathe the air of England, though they touch her shore only by accident, than they instantly

[1] "The Political Writings of John Dickinson," P. L. Ford ed., ii. 41.

become freemen. Strange contradiction! The same kingdom, at the same time, the asylum and the bane of liberty!

"To return to the charge against us, we can safely appeal to that Being, from whom no thought can be concealed, that our warmest wish and utmost ambition is, that we and our posterity may ever remain subordinate to, and dependent upon, our parent state.[1] This submission our reason approves, our affection dictates, our duty commands, and our interest enforces. If this submission, indeed, implies a dissolution of our constitution, and a renunciation of our liberty, we should be unworthy of our relation to her, if we should not frankly declare, that we regard it with horror; and every true Englishman will applaud this just distinction, and candid declaration. Our defense necessarily touches chords in unison with the fibres of his honest heart. They must vibrate in sympathetic tones. If we, his kindred, should be base enough to promise the humiliating subjection, he could not believe us. We should suffer all the infamy of the engagement, without finding the benefit expected from being thought as contemptible as we should undertake to be.

"But this submission implies not such insupportable evils; and our amazement is inexpressible, when we consider the gradual increase of these colonies from their small beginnings in the last century to their late flourishing condition, and how prodigiously, since their settlement, our parent state has advanced in wealth, force, and influence, till she has become the first power on the sea, and the envy of the world,—that these our better days should not strike conviction into every mind, that the freedom and happiness of the colonists are not inconsistent with her authority and prosperity. . . . What unknown offenses have we committed against her within these ten years, to provoke such an unexampled change in her conduct towards us? In the last war, she acknowledged us repeatedly to be faith-

[1] This avowal was made by Dickinson, and officially promulgated by the Convention of Pennsylvania, in July, 1774.

ful, dutiful, zealous, and useful in her cause. Is it criminal in us that our numbers, by the favor of Divine Providence, have greatly increased? That the poor choose to fly from their native countries in Europe to this continent? Or, that we have so much improved these woods, that if we can be forced into an unsuccessful resistance, avarice itself might be satiated with our forfeitures?

"It cannot with truth be urged that projects of innovation have commenced with us. Facts and their dates prove the contrary. Not a disturbance has happened on any part of this continent, but in consequence of some immediately preceding provocation. . . . Our highest pride and glory has been, with humble and unsuspecting duty to labor in contributing to elevate her to that exalted station she holds among the nations of the earth, and which, we still ardently desire and pray, she may hold, with fresh accessions of fame and prosperity, till time shall be no more.

"These being our sentiments, and, we are fully convinced, the sentiments of our brethren throughout the colonies, with unspeakable affliction we find ourselves obliged to oppose that system of dominion over us, arising from counsels pernicious both to our parent and to her children; to strive, if it be possible, to close the breaches made in our former concord, and stop the sources of future animosities. And may God Almighty, who delights in the titles of just and meciful, incline the hearts of all parties to that equitable and benevolent temper, which is necessary solidly to establish peace and harmony, in the place of confusion and dissension."[1]

IV.

If we attempt to estimate the practical effects of John Dickinson's work as a political writer during the American Revolution, we shall find it not easy to disentangle and to separate them from the practical effects of his work as a

[1] "The Political Writings of John Dickinson," P. L. Ford ed., ii. 48–57.

politician. The two lines of power were closely interwoven: each, in the main, helped the other, as each was liable, in its turn, to be hindered by the other. At any rate, just as the politico-literary influence of James Otis was, upon the whole, predominant in America from 1764 until 1767, so, from the latter date until some months after the outbreak of hostilities in 1775, was the politico-literary influence of John Dickinson predominant here. Moreover, as he succeeded to James Otis in the development of Revolutionary thought, so was he, at last, succeeded by Thomas Paine, who held sway among us, as the chief writer of political essays, from the early part of 1776 until the close of the Revolution itself.

The prodigious decline in the influence of John Dickinson, at the approach of the issue of Independence, is a thing not hard to explain: it was due in part to his personal characteristics, in part to the nature of his opinions. From the beginning of the troubles until some months after the first shedding of blood, in 1775, public opinion in America had set strongly in favor of making demand—even armed demand—for our political rights, but without any rupture of the colonial tie. It was, therefore, a period calling for clear and resolute statements of our claims, but with loyalty, urbanity, and tact. To be the chief literary exponent of such a period, John Dickinson was in every way fitted by talent, by temperament, by training. A man of wealth, cultivation, and elegant surroundings, practically versed in the law and in politics, considerate, cautious, disinclined to violent measures and to stormy scenes, actuated by a passion for the unity and greatness of the English race and for peace among all men, it was his sincere desire that the dispute with the mother country should be so conducted as to end, at last, in the perfect establishment of American constitutional rights within the empire, but without any hurt or dishonor to England, and without any permanent failure in respect and kindness between her and ourselves.

Nevertheless, in 1775, events occurred which gave a different aspect to the whole dispute, and swept an apparent majority of the American people quite beyond the sphere of such ideas and methods. John Dickinson's concession to parliament of a legislative authority over us, even to a limited extent, was roughly discarded; instead of which was enthroned among us the unhistoric and makeshift doctrine that American allegiance was due not at all to parliament, but to the crown only. Moreover, the moderation of tone, the urbane speech, the civility in conduct, exemplified by Dickinson in all this dispute with England, then became an anachronism and an offense. We were plunged at last into civil war—we had actually reached the stage of revolution; and the robust men who then ruled the scene, being of opinion that revolutions are apt to take place in some disregard of urbanity, and that civil wars have a peculiar tendency to give prominence to whatever is uncivil, were disposed, with no little contempt, to brush aside the moderate, conservative, and courteous Dickinson, who, either for advice or for conduct, seemed to them to have no further function to perform in the American world. His "Farmer's Letters" were declared by Jefferson to have been "really an 'ignis fatuus,' misleading us from true principles."[1] Even Edward Rutledge, who, in June, 1776, agreed with Dickinson in his opposition to the plan for Independence, nevertheless expressed some impatience with his intellectual fastidiousness and nicety,—declaring that the "vice of all his productions, to a considerable degree," was "the vice of refining too much."[2] Of course, to an impetuous and blustering man of affairs like John Adams, such a political theorist as John Dickinson, with his qualms and his scruples and his splitting of hairs, could have seemed but a "piddling

[1] "The Writings of Thomas Jefferson," H. A. Washington ed., vi. 486. Though the words cited in the text were written by Jefferson as late as in 1815, they evidently represent the opinions held by him in 1776.

[2] "The Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay," H. P. Johnston ed., i. 67.

genius," who, for a whole year before the proclamation of American Independence, had been giving "a silly cast to our whole doings."[1] This celebrated sneer of John Adams's, which occurs in a letter of his written from Philadelphia in July, 1775, was followed, in April, 1777, by an allusion to the same person, by the same letter-writer, implying that, as he thought, the public had in the meantime come over to his contemptuous opinion of Dickinson: "The Farmer turns out to be the man that I have seen him to be these two years. He is in total neglect and disgrace here. I am sorry for it, because of the forward part he took in the beginning of the controversy. But there is certainly such a thing as falling away in politics, if there is none in grace."[2]

In the close quarters and heated air of the actual conflict, John Dickinson, it may be, could hardly have expected to receive appreciation, forbearance, or even simple justice, from his angry political associates, then playing a desperate game which, for many of them, meant either success or the scaffold. It will be the privilege of Time through her mouthpiece, History, to temper somewhat the harsh estimates which prevailed during the later portion of his life, respecting this able, brilliant, and noble-minded man.

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[1] "Letters of John Adams, Addressed to his Wife," i. 268, Appendix. This letter was addressed to James Warren of Plymouth; was intercepted and published by the enemy; and for a time brought considerable disrepute and ill will upon the writer of it.

[2] Ibid. 207–208. In the original, the word "Farmer" is indicated by the first letter only.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THOMAS PAINE AS LITERARY FREELANCE IN THE WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE: 1776–1783.

I.—Paine's literary work between January and July, 1776—He then joins the Pennsylvania troops, and serves under General Roberdeau—Also, as aid-de-camp to General Greene at Fort Lee—Participates in Washington's retreat across New Jersey.

II.—In the midst of this retreat, he begins at Newark the writing of "The Crisis," which he continues at the subsequent stopping places—He publishes the first number at Philadelphia, December 19, 1776—Electrical effect of this paper—Its appeal to the emotions and the needs of the hour.

III.—His part in the labors and sacrifices of the war for Independence—His several employments by Congress—He serves under General Greene at the Battle of Brandywine—He stands by Washington at Valley Forge—In February, 1781, he accompanies John Laurens on a special mission to France—Their return at end of six months—His chief service after 1776 as a writer of "The Crisis"—The last number of "The Crisis" in December, 1783—His poverty during those years.

IV.—The secret of Paine's power over men and events—A great journalist—His aptness in expressing from day to day the real thought of the people—The range of his discussions during the war—He represents the faith of the American people in themselves and in a Higher Power helping them—His scornful addresses to Lord Howe and his brother—His predictions of British discomfiture—His inspiring appeals to the American people after defeat and amid discouragement.

V.—At the approach of peace, Paine turns from a prose song of congratulation, to explain the new dangers and new duties then confronting the people—Financial dishonor and disunion—His last literary services in the Revolution are on behalf of American honesty, and of American nationality.

I.

In the interval between the publication of his pamphlet, "Common Sense," in January, 1776, and the final determination of Congress, six months later, to take the very course recommended in that pamphlet, Thomas Paine fol-

lowed up the lines of argument and appeal on which he had thus wrought, by writing for a Philadelphia journal a series of at least four articles over the signature of "The Forester."[1] During this interval, also, appeared in Philadelphia a brochure which in our time has been confidently attributed to Paine, bearing the whimsical title,—"A Dialogue between the Ghost of General Montgomery just arrived from the Elysian Fields, and an American Delegate, in a Wood near Philadelphia,"—a well-managed political colloquy, in which the argument for Independence is developed with much of Paine's vigor, but perhaps with rather more accuracy, delicacy, and polish, than one expects to find in him.

But the man who had so brilliantly served the American cause by the pen, seems to have been eager to serve it by the sword also. Accordingly, in the summer of 1776, soon after the Declaration of Independence, he joined as a volunteer General Roberdeau's division of the Pennsylvania troops, called "the flying camp." With these troops he served at Perth Amboy, and at Bergen; and when, after a few weeks, their time expired and they returned home, Paine, unwilling at such a time to avail himself of such an excuse for leaving the field, "went to Fort Lee and served as aid-de-camp to General Greene, . . . and was with him during the whole of the black times of that trying campaign."[2] Benjamin Rush mentions that during that period, Paine lived a good deal with officers of the first rank in the army, at whose tables his 'Common Sense' always made him a welcome guest."[3] General Greene himself, in a let-

[1] Dunlap's "Pa. Packet, or the General Advertiser," for April 1, April 15, April 22, and May 20, 1776. No other number appeared in that paper down to July 1. I think the fourth number was the last of the series. I found the first three numbers in "The Pa. Gazette," for April 3, April 10, and April 24; but the fourth number I failed to find in that paper. Rush speaks, Cheetham, 38, of these essays as appearing "in Mr. Bradford's paper," *i. e.*, "The Pa. Journal," where Conway, "Life," i. 73, seems to have read them.

[2] Paine's own words. "Political Writings," ii. 493.

[3] Cheetham, 38.

ter written at Fort Lee to his wife, on the second of November, gives a glimpse of the daily life of his military family, especially mentioning the curious fact that in that time of appalling distress, Paine was "perpetually wrangling about mathematical problems"[1] with a certain other officer of the army.

Whoever served in the American army, in any capacity, in the autumn of 1776, had an employment full of discomfort and peril. On the twenty-seventh of August, Washington had suffered a shattering defeat in the battle of Long Island. Then had followed, in awful rapidity, a gloomy succession of disasters,—the abandonment of New York on the fifteenth of September, the defeat at White Plains on the twenty-eighth of October, the surrender of Fort Washington on the sixteenth of November, the stampede from Fort Lee on the eighteenth of November, finally, Washington's harassed retreat through New Jersey, and, on the eighth of December, his escape across the Delaware. In all these calamitous and distressing experiences,—defeats, retreats, marchings, and countermarchings, before a victorious and scornful foe,—Paine seems to have participated. A letter-writer in the British army, describing the capture of Fort Lee, connects Paine with the event in a somewhat grotesque manner: he relates that on the appearance of the British troops before that fortress, "the rebels fled like scared rabbits," leaving in their intrenchments "some poor pork, a few greasy proclamations, and some of that scoundrel 'Common Sense' man's letters, which we can read at our leisure, now that we have got one of the 'impregnable redoubts' of Mr. Washington's to quarter in."[2]

II.

It was in the midst of the dismay and disorder of this retreat across New Jersey, that Paine was inspired to begin that series of impassioned and invigorating pamphlets

[1] G. W. Greene, "The Life of Nathaniel Greene," i. 253.

[2] Markoe, in Moore, "Diary of the Am. Rev.," i. 350.

which at once became famous under the title of "The Crisis," and which continued to appear intermittently down to the close of the war. He has himself related how, on the scrambling retreat from Fort Lee, he began at Newark the first number of "The Crisis," "and continued writing it," as he says, "at every place we stopt at," [1] until it was finished, and issued from the press at Philadelphia on the nineteenth of December,[2]—just four days before that on which Washington announced to some of his officers his purpose to recross the Delaware and to strike the enemy at Trenton. Those were perhaps the darkest days of the Revolution. Even Washington had then written: "If every nerve is not strained to recruit the new army with all possible expedition, I think the game is pretty nearly up." [3]

It was under such circumstances that the first number of "The Crisis," [4] bearing the resounding signature of "Common Sense," greeted the American people with words that were electrical, and that soon became classic: "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph." [5]

As he passes on from paragraph to paragraph of this tremendous harangue, he touches with unfailing skill, with matchless power, the springs of anxiety, anger, contempt,

[1] "Political Writings," ii. 493.

[2] First in "The Pennsylvania Journal" on the date above mentioned. Conway, "Life," i. 85. It was then issued in pamphlet form, dated Dec. 23, 1776.

[3] "Writings," Sparks ed., iv. 231.

[4] This title, which of course was an obvious one for a pamphlet written under such circumstances, had been several times used before Paine made it famous; by Samuel Cooper for a pamphlet against the excise, published in Boston in 1754; and by a writer in London in 1766 for a pamphlet in defense of the colonies against the policy of the Stamp Act. According to Lossing, "Cycl. U. S. Hist., i. 347, the title was also used in London, in 1775–1776, for a series of papers "to be continued weekly during the present bloody civil war in America."

[5] "Political Writlngs," i. 75.

love of home, love of country, fortitude, cool deliberation, and passionate resolve; and he closes with such a battle-call as might almost have startled slain patriots from their new graves under the frozen clods: "Up and help us; lay your shoulders to the wheel; better have too much force than too little, when so great an object is at stake. Let it be told to the future world, that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive,[1] the city and country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet and repulse it. . . . It matters not where you live, or what rank of life you hold, the evil or the blessing will reach you all. . . . The heart that feels not now, is dead. The blood of his children will curse his cowardice, who shrinks back at a time when a little might have saved the whole, and made them happy. I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection. 'T is the business of little minds to shrink; but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death. . . . It is the madness of folly to expect mercy from those who have refused to do justice. . . . By perseverance and fortitude, we have the prospect of a glorious issue; by cowardice and submission, the sad choice of a variety of evils,—a ravaged country, a depopulated city, habitations without safety, and slavery without hope, our homes turned into barracks and bawdy-houses for Hessians, and a future race to provide for, whose fathers we shall doubt of. Look on this picture and weep over it; and if there yet remains one thoughtless wretch who believes it not, let him suffer it unlamented."[2]

III.

From the day on which he finished this pamphlet onward to the very close of the war, Paine seems to have had his

[1] In the text occurs here a supernumerary "that," which may have been due to a mere slip of the pen, but more likely indicates the actual state of Paine's grammatical development at that time.

[2] "Political Writings," ii. 80–82.

personal share in nearly every form of service or of privation which befell the American people. During the greater portion of this period, he gained his livelihood either by acting as secretary to the committee of Congress on foreign affairs, or as clerk in the commercial house of Owen Biddle, or as clerk to the general assembly of Pennsylvania. In September, 1777, while preparing at Philadelphia the dispatches of Congress for Franklin in Paris, he was interrupted by the booming of the cannon at Brandywine. Instantly dashing off a fresh number of "The Crisis," for the purpose of giving check to a popular panic, he threw aside his pen and by personal entreaty endeavored to induce the authorities to adopt some practicable plan for a volunteer defense of the city. Failing in this, he hurried away to the army, and as aid-de-camp to General Greene, and perhaps in other capacities as well, he partook to the full of the toils and perils of the troops during the remainder of that autumn, even standing by Washington's side in the grim retirement of Valley Forge.[1] In February, 1781, at a time when further American resistance was in danger of collapsing through sheer lack of the means to carry on the war, Paine sailed out of Boston harbor on the frigate "Alliance," in the company of Colonel John Laurens,—the latter going as minister extraordinary to France for the purpose of securing for Congress a special loan from the king. Just six months afterward, Paine and Laurens again appeared in Boston harbor, having with them, as the fruits of their expedition, 2,500,000 livres in silver, and in convoy a ship laden with clothing, ammunition, arms,—a most opportune supply, which had perhaps an essential part in the train of events which led, two months later, to the surrender of Cornwallis.[2]

Noble-minded and important as were these various ser-

[1] Paine gave a graphic sketch of his military experiences at that time, in a long letter to Franklin, which is printed in Conway, "Life," i. 104–113.

[2] "Secret Journals of Cong.," i. 351, 368–375; Hildreth, iii. 363. "Writings of Geo. Washington," Ford ed., ix. 355 n.

vices rendered by Paine to the American cause, on sea and land, in office and field, they could in no way be compared, as contributions to the success of the Revolution, with the work which he did during those same imperiled years merely as a writer, and especially as the writer of "The Crisis." Between December, 1776, when the first pamphlet of that series was published, down to December, 1783, when the last one left the printer's hands, this indomitable man produced no less than sixteen pamphlets under the same general title, adapting his message in each case to the supreme need of the hour, and accomplishing all this literary labor in a condition of actual poverty,—poverty so great that on one occasion, shortly after his return from France, he was obliged to apologize to his friend Laurens, then at the siege of Yorktown, for some delay in forwarding to headquarters a pair of new boots which that gallant officer had ordered in Philadelphia, by the naïve confession that he had not then in hand money enough to pay the bootmaker.[1]

IV.

The marvelous power which this untitled and impecunious penman wielded over the minds of men and over the course of events, during the entire period of our Revolution, was essentially the power of a great journalist. He had to the full the journalistic temperament,—its tastes, capacities, limitations. He had no interest in the past except so far as the past had a direct message for the present. His life was the life of to-day. He rose from his bed every morning to ask what was the uppermost thought, the keenest necessity, the most notable event, of that particular day. Books to him were of no vital account: his only library was a heap of pamphlets, and a pocket stuffed full of newspapers. All that he wrote was suggested by an occasion, and was meant for one. By some process of his own he knew just what the

[1] Paine's letter to Laurens, in Conway, "Life," i. 173–174.

people thought, feared, wished, loved, and hated: he knew it better than they knew it themselves. The secret of his strength lay in his infallible instinct for interpreting to the public its own conscience and its own consciousness, and for doing this in language which, at times, was articulate thunder and lightning. The history of the long war may be read in the blazing light of these mighty pamphlets, in which with the confident look, with the unhesitating voice, of a leader born to lead, he rallied the people in many an hour of disaster and fright, pleaded with them, rebuked them, inspired them, and pointed out to them the path of duty and of victory, or, standing in front of them, on their behalf flung his jests, taunts, and maledictions at the foe. Thus, he addresses, on one occasion, the leading British officer just then in America, in order, as he says to him, "to expose the folly of your pretended authority as a commissioner, the wickedness of your cause in general, and the impossibility of your conquering us at any rate." As regards the American people, he says, "my intention is to shew them their true and solid interest; to encourage them to their own good; to remove the fears and falsities which bad men have spread, and weak men have encouraged; and to excite in all men a love for union, and a cheerfulness for duty." [1]

In those days, certainly, Thomas Paine represented, not only the faith of the people in themselves, but their faith in God and in God's guidance and mastery of the affairs of this world, and in the ultimate victory of God's cause against every possible league of men and of devils. Speaking always in the character of an avowed Christian, and to a nation of Christians, Paine declares: "God Almighty will not give up a people to military destruction, or leave them unsupportedly to perish, who have so earnestly and so repeatedly sought to avoid the calamities of war, by every decent method which wisdom could invent. Neither have

[1] "Political Writings," i. 94.

I so much of the infidel in me as to suppose that He has relinquished the government of the world, and given us up to the care of devils." "If we believe the power of hell to be limited, we must likewise believe that their agents are under some providential control."[1] "There has been such a chain of extraordinary events in the discovery of this country at first, in the peopling and planting it afterwards, in the rearing and nursing it to its present state, and in the protection of it through the present war, that no man can doubt but Providence hath some nobler end to accomplish than the gratification of the petty elector of Hanover, or the ignorant and insignificant king of Britain." We dare to believe that ours is the cause to which Providence will give the victory, because "we fight not to enslave, but to set a country free, and to make room upon the earth for honest men to live in."[2]

And who is it, at this late day, who can any longer doubt the wisdom of our resolve to cast aside the colonial character, and to set up a national establishment for ourselves? "To know whether it be the interest of this continent to be Independent, we need only ask this easy, simple question: Is it the interest of a man to be a boy all his life?"[3]

And you, my Lord Howe, in your so-called proclamation,—a preposterous compound of assumptions, promises, and threats,—you have the audacity to speak of our claim to Independence as something "extravagant and inadmissible." "Why, God bless me, what have you to do with our Independence? We ask no leave of yours to set it up; we ask no money of yours to support it; we can do better without your fleets and armies than with them; you may soon have enough to do to protect yourselves without being burdened with us. We are very willing to be at peace with you, to buy of you and sell to you, and, like young beginners in the world, to work for our living. Therefore, why

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[1] "Political Writings," i. 76, 77.

[2] Ibid. 146–147, 131.

[3] Ibid. 105.

do you put yourselves out of cash, when we know you cannot spare it, and we do not desire you to run into debt?"[1]

And, moreover, what a ridiculous thing it is for a man in your circumstances to issue a proclamation at all! "Your authority in the Jerseys is now reduced to the small circle which your army occupies, and your proclamation is nowhere else seen, unless it be to be laughed at. The mighty subduers of the continent have retreated into a nut-shell; and the proud forgivers of our sins are fled from those they came to pardon. . . . In short, you have managed your Jersey expedition so very dexterously, that the dead only are conquerors, because none will dispute the ground with them."[2]

As to those troops of yours, with which you have tried to overawe us, and from which the world has been taught to expect so much, what is their real condition? "Like a wounded, disabled whale, they want only time and room to die in; and though in the agony of their exit, it may be unsafe to live within the flapping of their tail, yet every hour shortens their date, and lessens their power of mischief."[3] "Their condition is both despicable and deplorable: out of cash, out of heart, out of hope. A country furnished with arms and ammunition, as America now is, with three millions of inhabitants, and three thousand miles distant from the nearest enemy that can approach her, is able to look and laugh them in the face."[4]

"Your cargo of pardons," he says contemptuously to the three British commissioners who came out in 1778, "will have no market. It is unfashionable to look at them—even speculation is at an end. They have become a perfect drug, and no way calculated for the climate."[5] "You may plan and execute little mischiefs; but are they worth the expense they cost you, or will such partial evils have any

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[1] "Political Writings," i. 86. [2] Ibid. 92.
[3] Ibid. 101. [4] Ibid. 122. [5] Ibid. 157.

effect on the general cause? Your expedition to Egg-Harbor will be felt at a distance like an attack upon a hen-roost, and expose you in Europe with a sort of childish phrenzy. Is it worth while to keep an army to protect you in writing proclamations, or to get once a year into winter-quarters?"[1]

As he had bestowed much frankness on Lord Howe, he is disposed to treat his brother, Sir William, with equal distinction: "Indolence and inability have too large a share in your composition, ever to suffer you to be anything more than the hero of little villanies and unfinished adventures."[2]

"Let me ask, sir, what great exploits have you performed? Through all the variety of changes and opportunities which the war has produced, I know no one action of yours that can be styled masterly. You have moved in and out, backward and forward, round and round, as if valor consisted in a military jig. The history and figure of your movements would be truly ridiculous could they be justly delineated. They resemble the labors of a puppy pursuing his tail; the end is still at the same distance, and all the turnings round must be done over again."[3] "The time, sir, will come when you, in a melancholy hour, shall reckon up your miseries, by your murders in America. Life with you begins to wear a clouded aspect. The vision of pleasurable delusion is wearing away, and changing to the barren wild of age and sorrow. The poor reflection of having served your king will yield you no consolation in your parting moments. He will crumble to the same undistinguishable ashes with yourself, and have sins enough of his own to answer for. It is not the farcical benedictions of a bishop, nor the cringing hypocrisy of a court of chaplains, nor the formality of an act of parliament, that can change guilt into innocence, or make the punishment one pang the less. You may, perhaps, be unwilling to be serious; but this destruction of the goods of Providence, this havoc of the human

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[1] "Political Writings," i. 165. [2] Ibid. 134. [3] Ibid. 140–141.

race, and this sowing the world with mischief, must be accounted for to Him who made and governs it. To us they are only present sufferings, but to Him they are deep rebellions." [1]

Turning to his fellow-countrymen on the day after a harrowing defeat, his words go forth as a trumpet call to reassurance and to a renewal of the conflict: "Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must like men undergo the fatigues of supporting it. The event of yesterday was one of those kind alarms which are [2] just sufficient to rouse us to duty, without being of consequence enough to depress our fortitude. It is not a field of a few acres of ground, but a cause, that we are defending; and whether we defeat the enemy in one battle, or by degrees, the consequence will be the same. . . . We have always been masters at the last push, and always shall be while we do our duty. . . . Shall a band of ten or twelve thousand robbers, who are this day fifteen hundred or two thousand men less in strength than they were yesterday, conquer America, or subdue even a single State? The thing cannot be done, unless we sit down and suffer them to do it. Another such a brush, notwithstanding we lost the ground, would, by still reducing the enemy, put them in a condition to be afterwards totally defeated. . . . It is distressing to see an enemy advancing into a country, but it is the only place in which we can beat them, and in which we have always beaten them, whenever they have made the attempt. . . . You have too much at stake to hesitate. You ought not to think an hour upon the matter, but to spring to action at once. Other States have been invaded; have likewise driven off the invaders. Now our time and turn is come, and perhaps the finishing stroke is reserved for us. When we look back on the dangers we have been saved from, and reflect on the

[1] "Political Writings," i. 145–146.

[2] The text reads "is." On the day after an unfortunate battle, most men, especially most men whose efforts to be grammatical have been postponed until middle life, are liable to some embarrassment from their nominatives.

success we have been blessed with, it would be sinful either to be idle or to despair." [1]

Near the close of the first three years of the war, he sums up the results in a single sentence: "It is now nearly three years since the tyranny of Britain received its first repulse by the arms of America,—a period which has given birth to a new world, and erected a monument to the folly of the old." [2]

V.

And when, at last, the final victory is come and actual peace draws on, this unfatigued prophet consents to pause long enough to chant, in sinewy prose, a virile song of congratulation; but almost before its close he begins to beckon his fellow-countrymen away from mere exultation, and from past success, to point toward the new dangers and the new duties which that very success is about to lay upon them: "The times that tried men's souls are over—and the greatest and completest Revolution the world ever knew, gloriously and happily accomplished. But to pass from the extremes of danger to safety—from the tumult of war to the tranquillity of peace—though sweet in contemplation, requires a gradual composure of the senses to receive it. Even calmness has the power of stunning, when it opens too instantly upon us. . . . In the present case, the mighty magnitude of the object, the various uncertainties of fate which it has undergone, the numerous and complicated dangers we have suffered or escaped, the eminence we now stand on, and the vast prospect before us, must all conspire to impress us with contemplation. To see it in our power to make a world happy, to teach mankind the art of being so, to exhibit on the theatre of the universe a character hitherto unknown, and to have, as it were, a new creation intrusted to our hands, are honors that command reflection, and can neither be too highly estimated, nor too gratefully received. In this pause, then, of reflection, while the storm

[1] "Political Writings," i. 128–130. [2] Ibid. 149.

is ceasing, and the long-agitated mind vibrating to a rest, let us look back on the scenes we have passed, and learn from experience what is yet to be done." [1]

But just before us lie two immense dangers: the first, financial dishonor, the second, disunion. To guard against, to avert, these two dangers—this is the new duty which now summons us: "The debt which America has contracted, compared with the cause she has gained, and the advantages to flow from it, ought scarcely to be mentioned. . . . Character is much easier kept than recovered; and that man, if any such there be, who, from sinister views, or littleness of soul, lends unseen his hand to injure it, contrives a wound it will never be in his power to heal. As we have established an inheritance for posterity, let that inheritance descend, with every mark of an honorable conveyance. The little it will cost compared with the worth of the States, the greatness of the object, and the value of national character, will be a profitable exchange." [2]

"But that which must more forcibly strike a thoughtful, penetrating mind, and which includes and renders easy all inferior concerns, is the union of the States. On this, our great national character depends. It is this which must give us importance abroad and security at home. . . . In short, we have no other national sovereignty than as United States. . . . Individuals, or individual States, may call themselves what they please; but the world, and especially the world of enemies, is not to be held in awe by the whistling of a name. Sovereignty must have power to protect all the parts that compose and constitute it; and as the United States, we are equal to the importance of the title, but otherwise we are not. Our union, well and wisely regulated and cemented, is the cheapest way of being great —the easiest way of being powerful, and the happiest invention in government which the circumstances of America can admit of . . . . I ever feel myself hurt when I hear

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[1] "Political Writings," i. 256–257.

[2] Ibid. 258–259.

the union, that great palladium of our liberty and safety, the least irreverently spoken of. It is the most sacred thing in the constitution of America, and that which every man should be most proud and tender of. Our citizenship in the United States is our national character. Our citizenship in any particular State is only our local distinction. By the latter we are known at home, by the former to the world. Our great title is AMERICANS." [1]

[1] "Political Writings," i. 259–260.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE LITERARY WARFARE AGAINST AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE: LOYALIST WRITERS IN PROSE AND VERSE: 1776-1783.

I.—The writings of the Loyalists during this stage of the Revolution inferior in amount to those of the Revolutionists—Their decline in the use of serious discussion—Three peculiarities in the attitude of the Loyalists—Their confidence in the soundness of their own opinions; their contempt for the Revolutionists as vulgar and unprincipled; their perfect expectation of the success of the British arms.

II.—The Loyalist sarcasm on the practical denial of liberty by the pretended American champions of it—Many colonists forced into support of the Revolutionary measures—"The Pausing American Loyalist"—"The Rebels"—"A Familiar Epistle."

III.—The Loyalist taunt concerning the plebeian origin and occupations of the Revolutionary leaders—"A Modern Catechism"—List of American officers as published in Germany—The "brace of Adamses"—A Charleston satire.

IV.—The attacks of the Tory satirists concentrated on Congress, as a body representing the vulgarity and profligacy of the Revolutionary movement.

V.—The exploits of Congress in the field of finance a theme for Tory derision—The depreciation of American paper-money—Jests thereon from the Tory newspapers—Satire on the tattered condition of the American army.

VI.—Tory jests upon individual leaders of the Revolution—Especial attention paid to Thomas Paine.

VII.—Tory mirth over the military and naval disappointments of the French alliance—Failure of the allied campaign of 1778—"The Epilogue," as sung by Congress at the conclusion of the Farce "Independence"—Failure of the allied campaign of 1779—The mirthful ballad "About Savannah"—"A New Ballad."

VIII.—Some serious Loyalist discussion of the state of affairs consequent on the American alliance with France—"Letters of Papinian"—The unnaturalness of the French alliance, and its disastrous effects, set forth in "A Letter to the People of America."

IX.—The possible calamities to overtake the Americans at the hands of their French allies, exhibited by many Tory writers—Outline of their opinions on the subject—"The Prophecy," on French and Papal despotism in America, after its separation from England by the help of Roman Catholic France.

X.—Distrust as to the wisdom of the French alliance, even among Revolutionary statesmen—The letters of Silas Deane, in 1781.

I.

In the effort to obtain a just view of the part actually taken by the Loyalist writers, especially in the final and supreme stage of the Revolution when Independence had become its avowed object, we find ourselves confronting, at the outset, two notable facts: first, the marked inferiority of Loyalist literature, as regards mere amount, by comparison with the literature produced during the same time by the Revolutionists; secondly, the lessened confidence of the Loyalist writers in serious argumentative discussion, together with a corresponding increase in their employment of mere emotional appeal—that is, of rapturous assertions of the nobility, strength, and assured success of their own cause, and derisive assertions of the baseness and the weakness of the cause of their countrymen in rebellion.

That the writings of the Loyalists, from 1776 to 1783, were in number inferior to those of the opposite party, can now surprise no one who considers the circumstances of that time, when all active Loyalists had been ruthlessly harried out of the country or harried into the enemy's lines, and when in all the length and breadth of the land, from New Hampshire to Georgia, not a newspaper, not a printing-press, was left at their service, excepting, of course, in the city of New York and in such other large towns as might chance to be for any part of the time under British occupation. Moreover, it will not be forgotten that such execrable things as Tory writings, even if they got into print, could hardly get into circulation; they could come in only as they were smuggled in, and they could pass from hand to hand only by that sort of stealth which is itself a confession of crime.

As regards mere vivacity, the literature of the Loyalists is in no respect a loser by its increasing disuse of serious debate, any more than it is a loser thereby as regards its importance for historic interpretation—for its use to us in our effort to enter into the inward life of that period. On

both sides, men took part in the struggle, not merely with their brains and their hands, but with their hearts; they waged the war in the sphere of sentiment and passion, as well as in that of reason and physical force; they hurled at one another not only facts and arguments, but sarcasms and taunts and curses; they fought one another, as with logic, so also with wit and humor and scoff and scorn. Of course, the spiritual history of such a controversy is left half told, so long as the emotional side of it is left untold.

Finally, if we would do justice to this branch of Loyalist literature—if we would even understand it—we must have in mind certain peculiarities in the attitude of the Loyalists toward the Revolution, and especially toward their own countrymen who were pushing it on. In the first place, as to the constitutional and political questions involved in the controversy, the Loyalists had an unclouded conviction that they themselves were right. In the second place, belonging as they did, in many cases, to the oldest, wealthiest, most dignified families in the country, and accustomed always to take the lead in the affairs of their several colonies, they, of course, looked down with contempt and disgust upon the whole Revolution as a thoroughly plebeian movement,—propelled from the beginning, as they thought, by upstarts and adventurers,—obscure attorneys, blacksmiths, shopkeepers, and ploughmen, who were thus presuming to flout at their betters, and to turn the world upside down in the hope of being themselves at last on top. In the third place, the Loyalists fully expected to be on the winning side. They had the most perfect assurance of the ultimate and utter failure of the rebellion; they could not conceive it as possible, that these colonial rebels, with their lack of money, their lack of military supplies, their lack of military training and experience, could hold out very long, even though they should at last have foreign help, as against the most stupendous military and naval power in the modern world.

These three peculiarities in the attitude of the Loyalists

resulted in such a condition of mind as made it natural for them to apply to the rebellion, and especially to the rebels, whatever words they could command from the vocabulary of derision and hate, all the more so when they finally lost faith in any good to be got by arguing with these extremely determined criminals. Then, indeed, with whatever gifts they had for prose or verse, they set themselves to the task of keeping up their own spirits and of keeping down the spirits of their opponents, by lyric celebrations of the nobility and invincible might of their own cause, and by the most scornful vituperation of the cause which they so hated and despised. Since they could not reason down the rebellion, they meant, not only to fight it down, but to laugh it down, to sneer it down, and to make it seem to all the world as ridiculous as, to themselves, it already seemed sordid and vulgar and weak.

II.

From the very beginning of any sharp division between the two parties, a favorite sarcasm on the part of the Tories had been one aimed at the gross inconsistency of the Whigs in conducting what they called the cause of liberty by methods which simply crushed and stifled liberty,—the only liberty allowed to anybody by the Whigs being the liberty to think just as they thought. Consequently, not a few persons, it was said, were included in the Whig ranks because of their own timidity; they had been dragooned and terrorized into an apparent support of the Revolution; their Whiggism was but a mask assumed for personal safety against intolerable social pressure and mob-violence. Thus, the most practical measure of the Congress of 1774 was its so-called "association," which had been carried into every community and had been offered for the individual assent of every colonist. From that moment, fidelity to the "association" had become a test of every man's political rectitude. He who should hesitate, above all, he who should refuse, to sign the "association," became the object of

public suspicion and detestation; and if at all prominent in the community, he was liable to gross personal indignities—to be tarred and feathered, to have his house mobbed, to be ruined in business and in property. Many a man, said the Loyalists, had signed the "association," not because he desired to do so, but because he did not dare to refuse. There remain to us from that time some capital verses in the form of a parody on Hamlet's soliloquy, illustrating the moral ignominy of this situation, wherein, according to the Tories, multitudes of loyal Americans were compelled to become trimmers and hypocrites and rebels, or else to flee from home and country and their established means of livelihood, and to find in England only exile, the cold pity of strangers, and in many cases hunger and rags and a miserable death. This little poem, written by some unknown Tory of that period, is called "The Pausing American Loyalist"; and it represents such a person as communing with himself over the horrid situation, and balancing in his mind the contrasted claims of that frightful alternative which was thus presented to him:

"To sign, or not to sign!—That is the question:
Whether 't were better for an honest man
To sign—and so be safe; or to resolve,
Betide what will, against 'associations,'
And, by retreating, shun them. To fly—I reck
Not where—and, by that flight, t' escape
Feathers and tar, and thousand other ills
That Loyalty is heir to: 't is a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To fly—to want—
To want?—perchance to starve! Ay, there 's the rub!
For, in that chance of want, what ills may come
To patriot rage, when I have left my all,
Must give me pause! There 's the respect
That makes us trim, and bow to men we hate.
For, who would bear th' indignities o' th' times,
Congress decrees, and wild Convention plans,
The laws controll'd, and inj'ries unredressed,

The insolence of knaves, and thousand wrongs
Which patient liege men from vile rebels take,
When he, sans doubt, might certain safety find,
Only by flying? Who would bend to fools,
And truckle thus to mad, mob-chosen upstarts,
But that the dread of something after flight
(In that blest country, where, yet, no moneyless
Poor wight can live) puzzles the will,
And makes ten thousands rather sign—and eat,
Than fly—to starve on Loyalty!
Thus, dread of want makes cowards of us all;
And, thus, the native hue of Loyalty
Is sicklied o'er with a pale cast of trimming;
And enterprises of great pith and virtue,
But unsupported, turn their streams away,
And never come to action." [1]

If, while the two parties were thus beginning to take sides upon the issue thus formed, such tyranny was exercised over the opinions and actions of men, to what monstrous size might not this tyranny be expected to grow after the issue had become settled, and seasoned, in blood? At no later period of the Revolution, therefore, was there any failure on the part of the Tory writers to call attention to this shocking aspect of the much-vaunted movement for liberty: as, in 1778, in a ballad called "The Rebels,"—

"For one lawful ruler, many tyrants we've got,
Who force young and old to their wars, to be shot" [2];

or, as in "A Familiar Epistle," addressed to Robert Wills, the printer of the "Carolina Gazette," by a young Loyalist

[1] This parody, which clearly belongs to the period between the first and second Congresses, is given by F. Moore, "Diary of the Am. Rev.," i. 169, as from the "Middlesex Journal" for Jan. 30, 1776, where, if that date be correctly given, it was probably reproduced from some copy printed at least a year earlier.

[2] The whole ballad is given in F. Moore, "Songs and Ballads of the Rev.," 198.

of Charleston, who was seized and thrown into jail for the crime of having written it:

"Excuse me, dear Robert, I can't think it true,
Though Solomon says it, that nothing is new.
Had he lived in these times, we had rather been told
Our West World 's so new, it has nothing that 's old.
But should he insist in his own way to have it,
I would beg leave to ask of this wise son of David
A few simple questions: as, where he e'er saw
Men legally punished for not breaking the law?
Tarr'd, feather'd, and carted for drinking Bohea?—
And by force and oppression compell'd to be free?—
The same men maintaining that all human kind
Are, have been, and shall be, as free as the wind,
Yet impaling and burning their slaves for believing
The truth of the lessons they 're constantly giving?"[1]

III.

Closely connected with this taunt that the pretended champions of liberty were actual perpetrators of despotism, and, indeed, often woven with it into the same passage of satire, was the added taunt as to their low origin and vulgar occupations and characters:

"With loud peals of laughter, your sides, sirs, would crack,
To see General Convict, and Colonel Shoe-black,
With their hunting-shirts and rifle-guns;
See cobblers and quacks, rebel priests and the like,
Pettifoggers and barbers, with sword and with pike,
All strutting, the standard of Satan beside,
And honest names using, their black deeds to hide."[2]

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[1] The whole poem is given in "The Loyalist Poetry of the Rev.," 58–60. Its exact date is not ascertained. Though it appeared in "The Pennsylvania Ledger" for February 14, 1778, it had probably been printed before.

[2] Part of the ballad called "The Rebels," by the Loyalist officer, John Ferdinand Smyth, in F. Moore, "Songs and Ballads of the Rev.," 197–198.

The keynote of a great deal of Loyalist sarcasm is given in this charge that the Revolutionist party is a party of upstarts and nobodies, while the Loyalist leaders, from their superior wealth, cultivation, social position, and from their habits of political prominence, claimed to be and seemed to be the old nobility, who, standing by the law and the right, were being displaced and hustled aside by proletariats—by political parvenus and nondescripts. The Revolution was brought about, they said, not by the true men of the country—the men who had the most stake in it—but by needy young lawyers, by bankrupts and defaulters, by uneasy adventurers, by word-spouting cobblers and tinkers who found mending the state an easier and a more lucrative job than that of mending kettles and patching shoes. Thus, in "The New York Gazette" for May 23, 1778, was printed "A Modern Catechism," consisting, in part, of the following questions and answers:

"Q. Who have been the principal advocates for, and instigators of, the American Revolution?

"A. An unprincipled and a disappointed faction in the mother country, and an infernal, dark-designing group of men in America audaciously styling themselves a Congress. . . .

"Q. What kind of men compose the Congress?

"A. It consists of obscure, pettifogging attorneys, bankrupt shopkeepers, outlawed smugglers, etc., etc.

"Q. Of what complexion are their mobs and leaders?

"A The wretched banditti . . . are the refuse and dregs of mankind; their generals are men of rank and honor nearly on a par with those of the Congress."

Even in Europe was spread this opinion as to the low-born origin and vulgar characters of many of the Revolutionist party, as may partly be seen from a list of them drawn up by Professor August Schlözer, of Göttingen, probably from information furnished him by some of the German auxiliaries in America. According to this list, General McDougall was originally a sailor, Arnold a horse-dealer,

Putnam an inn-keeper, Sullivan a breeches-maker, Knox a blacksmith, Greene an advocate, disbarred, Wayne a tanner-boy, Irvine a hatter, Maxwell a swineherd, Nagle a cowherd, and Glover a tailor; while others are named as of broken and disreputable business antecedents.[1] It was no uncommon thing, in the earlier years of the Revolution, for Samuel Adams to be described as a mere tax-collector embarrassed by official dishonesty, as a vulgar and an unscrupulous village politician; and John Adams, as a reckless political adventurer, with nothing to lose and everything to win by tumult, as spurred on to desperate measures by poverty, by disappointment, and by a passion for notoriety; and when, in 1770, Governor Shirley spoke contemptuously of their lack of standing, describing them as that "brace of Adamses," the younger of them replied in language which seemed proudly to concede the point of social inferiority: "Is it not a pity that a brace of so obscure a breed should be the only ones to defend the household, when the generous mastiffs and best-blooded hounds are all hushed to silence by the bones and crumbs that are thrown to them? Even Cerberus himself is bought off with a sop."[2]

In a different form the same classic sneer of the Tories is embalmed in these lines, written by an unknown versifier in South Carolina:

"Not only our money from nothing appears,
From nothing our hopes, and from nothing our fears,
From nothing our statesmen, our army, our fleet,—
From nothing they came, and to nought they 'll retreat,
And no arms they handle so well as their feet.
Down at night a bricklayer or carpenter lies,
With next sun a Lycurgus or Solon doth rise;
. . . . . .
Priests, tailors, and cobblers fill with heroes the camp,
And sailors, like crawfish, crawl out of each swamp."[3]

[1] Aug. L. Schlözer, "Correspondence," viii. 3.
[2] "The Works of John Adams," ii. 233, 295.
[3] "The Loyalist Poetry of the Rev.," 59–60.

IV.

Moreover, it is habitual with the Loyalist writers to speak of the men who brought on and conducted the Revolution, not only as upstarts, as mere nobodies tossed into prominence by social commotion, but as positively bad men, as insincere and selfish men, as political hypocrites and knaves, who were knowingly misleading the people into crime and ruin. No doubt the Tories truly thought that the Revolutionary leaders were as a class what they uniformly called them, great scoundrels; and finding the choicest representatives of these scoundrels brought together in Congress, very naturally they poured out upon that particular body by name their choicest execration. A sufficiently vigorous example of this pleasant habit of theirs is furnished to our hands by a Tory ballad called "The Congress," which was written in the spring of 1776, and which at once endeared itself to the whole Tory party by the comprehensiveness and alacrity of its curses upon every man and hat and shoestring in that detestable sham-legislature:

"These hardy knaves and stupid fools,
Some apish and pragmatic mules,
Some servile acquiescing tools,—
These, these compose the Congress!

"When Jove resolved to send a curse,
And all the woes of life rehearse,
Not plague, not famine, but much worse—
He cursed us with a Congress.

"Then peace forsook this hapless shore,
Then cannons blazed with horrid roar;
We hear of blood, death, wounds, and gore,
The offspring of the Congress.

"Imperial Rome from scoundrels rose,
Her grandeur 's hailed in verse and prose;

Venice the dregs of sea compose;
So sprung the mighty Congress.

"When insects vile emerge to light,
They take their short inglorious flight,
Then sink again to native night,
An emblem of the Congress.

"With freemen's rights they wanton play;
At their command, we fast and pray;
With worthless paper they us pay,
A fine device of Congress.

"With poverty and dire distress,
With standing armies us oppress,
Whole troops to Pluto swiftly press,
As victims to the Congress.

. . . . . .

"Good Lord! disperse this venal tribe;
Their doctrine let no fools imbibe—
Let Balaam no more asses ride,
Nor burdens bear to Congress.

"With puffs, and flams, and gasconade,
With stupid jargon they bravade;
We transports take—Quebec invade—
With laurels crown the Congress.

"Our mushroom champions they dragoon,
We cry out hero, not poltroon,
The next campaign we 'll storm the moon,
And there proclaim the Congress.

"Old Catiline, and Cromwell too,
Jack Cade, and his seditious crew,
Hail brother-rebel at first view,
And hope to meet the Congress.

"The world 's amazed to see the pest
The tranquil land with wars infest ;
Britannia puts them to the test,
And tries the strength of Congress.

"O goddess, hear our hearty prayers ;
Confound the villains by the ears ;
Disperse the plebeians—try the peers,
And execute the Congress.

"See, see, our hope begins to dawn !
Bold Carleton scours the Northern lawn,
The sons of faction sigh forlorn,
Dejected is the Congress.

"Clinton, Burgoyne and gallant Howe,
Will soon reward our conduct true,
And to each traitor give his due,
Perdition waits the Congress.

. . . . . .

"Prepare, prepare, my friends, prepare
For scenes of blood, the field of war ;
To royal standard we 'll repair,
And curse the haughty Congress.

"Huzza ! huzza ! we thrice huzza !
Return peace, harmony, and law !
Restore such times as once we saw,
And bid adieu to Congress." [1]

V.

Besides the vulgarity and the political profligacy of the men who composed the American Congress, the amazing exploits of that body in the field of public finance were a

[1] "The Loyalist Poetry of the Rev.," 70–74.

theme for inextinguishable laughter on the part of the Tories. It must be admitted that, to an unfriendly observer, there was no slight inducement to satire in the fiscal policy of this famous legislature, obliged, as it was, to provide for the expenses of a great war, and yet being itself destitute of the power to raise a dollar by any form of taxation. No doubt, also, there were in Congress some members with very magnificent conceptions of the ability even of such a legislature to create money merely by setting in motion a printing press; like that delegate who, in a debate on the necessity of a tax as a means of getting money for the public debt, is said to have exclaimed—"Do you think, gentlemen, that I will consent to load my constituents with taxes, when we can send to our printer and get a wagon-load of money, one quire of which will pay for the whole?"[1]

Whatever may have been its justification, Congress did attempt to create money by its own fiat as applied to certain oblong bits of paper, and with results among the most ghastly in the history of finance; its issues of such money amounting to six millions of dollars in 1775, to nineteen millions in 1776, to thirteen millions in 1777, to over sixty-three millions in 1778, and to one hundred and forty millions in 1779.[2] Although, at first, this paper circulated at par, yet shortly after the Declaration of Independence the process of depreciation began and then went on with terrific speed. At the end of the year 1777, one Congress-dollar was worth only thirty-three cents, at the beginning of the year 1779 only twelve cents, and at the beginning of 1780 less than two cents.[3] A correspondent of General Gates, writing from Virginia in the latter year, mentions the payment of eleven dollars for a pound of brown sugar, of seventy-five dollars for a yard of linen, and

[1] Pelatiah Webster, "Political Essays," 7–8 n.

[2] Charles J. Bullock, "The Finances of the U. S. from 1775 to 1789, with Especial Reference to the Budget," 130.

[3] Ibid. 126, 129, 130, 136.

of one hundred dollars for a pound of tea.[1] When, in the year 1780, Gates was ordered by Congress to proceed from his home in Virginia to the army in South Carolina,—not a long journey—he was allowed thirty-thousand dollars in continental money for his traveling expenses. On arriving at his destination, he found it necessary to build a hundred yards of picketing as an enclosure for some British prisoners in his custody, and was somewhat startled to find that it cost him $500,000.[2] In 1781, Jefferson records the fee of his physician for two calls as $3000, and the price of three quarts of brandy as $355.50. Thomas Paine mentions the purchase of a pair of woolen stockings, for which he paid $300.[3]

This grotesque depreciation in the currency provided by the Revolutionary government seemed to be ominous of its inevitable and speedy failure in the attempt to keep up the war with only such sinews of war; and doubtless, it was for its tremendous effect in deepening and extending public expectation of the speedy collapse of the Revolution, that the comedy of Congressional financiering received so much attention from the Tory humorists. Within three months after the Declaration of Independence, the "New York Gazette" contained a satirical advertisement calling for a quantity of Congress-dollars as a particularly cheap form of papering for the walls of a house; and, at about the same time, a lampoon insinuating that this money was then commonly used for kindling fires, lighting pipes, shaving, and still more ignoble uses; and a year or two later, the account of a "Dream," wherein was seen a vision of the "hall of justice" in the nether world, and the arrival there of the members of the American Congress. These mighty senators "were so fond of their usurped dignity as to have brought their chairs along with them at the expense of paying double ferriage" in crossing the Styx. This additional

[1] I take these items from the Gates Papers, still unpublished, belonging to the N. Y. Historical Society.

[2] Gates Papers.

[3] Conway, "Life of Paine," i. 161.

charge, however, had made little difference to them, "as they had all taken in Charon, who was such a simpleton as to take Congress-dollars in payment, which he is now offering at the rate of thirty-seven for one, swearing at the same time that" these American Congressmen "and their lumber were the most disagreeable load he ever carried; for every one in his turn attempted to take the helm, and one Putnam was finding fault with the constitution of his boat."[1] Even among the friends of the Revolution, the disgust of the people with the currency provided by Congress became so great that in 1781, according to a lively narrative given in the same repository of Loyalist humor, there was in Philadelphia a boisterous parade composed of citizens of that town wearing paper dollars in their hats for cockades, and carrying in front of them a dog besmeared with tar but having paper dollars stuck on instead of feathers, this dog being followed by a jailor in the act of refusing the paper money which a poor prisoner had offered him for a glass of rum, and by a group of tradesmen who had shut up their shops and would sell no more goods for such money.[2] All this was exhibited in front of the state house, with Congress inside and invited to witness the spectacle without any charge.

Of course, in such a condition of the public finances, the officers and men of the Revolutionary army were reduced to the greatest distress, and often presented a tattered appearance perhaps unrivaled in military history, except by Falstaff's men,—since the paper dollars in which they received their pay, instead of relieving them, only added to the rags of which they already had an abundance. After the arrival of the French allies, many American officers were unable, for lack of decent clothes and decent food, to reciprocate social courtesies with these elegant foreign friends. Not from inhumanity, surely, but on account of its pertinence to the question as to how long a rebellion supported

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[1] "The New York Gazette," Jan. 30, 1779. [2] Ibid. May 12, 1781.

in such a way might be expected to hold out, this impoverished condition of the American army was constantly held up to ridicule. A single specimen of such Tory ridicule may suffice us: it is an entry in the diary of a British officer in New York for March 1, 1777. "A deserter from the rebel army at Westchester, who came into New York this morning, says that the Congress troops are suffering extremely for food and rum; that there is not a whole pair of breeches in the army; and that the last news from Mr. Washington's camp was, that he had to tie up his with strings, having parted with the buttons to buy the necessaries of life. There is great plenty of rag money, but since old Franklin went to France, there is no one left to argue it into the favor of the Jerseymen, who, though justly called Republicans, are not willing to give even bad provisions for Congress notes, or mere rebel promises to pay." [1]

VI.

The Tory humorists were by no means content with ridicule of the rebellion in general, or even of certain great groups of rebels embodied in the shape of a congress or of an army; they perhaps found their keenest sport in pointing their shafts at individual rebels, as Washington, Charles Lee, Putnam, William Livingston, Robert Morris, Franklin, the Adamses, and, especially, at their own erring brother of the quill, Mr. Thomas Paine. Thus, in their chief newspaper, for January 30, 1779, are reported, by the favorite means of a prophetic vision, certain transactions soon to take place in the infernal regions, involving the doom to be meted out to the leading rebels, as fast as they shall present themselves before that ultimate tribunal. Among them, in due course, arrived Paine, who, having "a huge bundle of papers on his back, openly accused Mr. Robert Morris of negligence and dishonesty in his dealings with the public.

[1] Smythe's Diary, cited in F. Moore, "Diary of the Am. Rev.," i. 399–400.

Morris arose in great rage to reply, or knock him down," whereupon the papers on Paine's shoulders, "expanding themselves, assumed the form of wings; and his body, suddenly diminishing, exhibited the form of a mosquito, which immediately flew away into Tartarus, where he found the climate agreeable to his constitution."

Some months afterward, in the same newspaper, the same troublesome rebel penman is made the object of a salutation so ardent as to require the aid of verse:

"Hail mighty Thomas! in whose works are seen
A mangled Morris and distorted Deane;
Whose splendid periods flash for Lee's defense,—
Replete with everything but Common Sense.
You, by whose labors no man e'er was wiser,
You, of invective great monopolizer;
You, who, unfeeling as a Jew or Turk,
Attack a Jay, a Paca, and a Burke;
You, who, in fervor of satiric vein,
Maul and abuse the mild and meek Duane,
And eager to traduce the worthiest men,
Despite the energy of Drayton's pen,—
O say, what name shall dignify the lays
Which now I consecrate to sing thy praise!
In pity tell by what exalted name
Thou would'st be damned to an eternal fame:
Shall Common Sense, or Comus greet thine ear,
A piddling poet, or puffed pamphleteer?
. . . . . .
But sure no mortal mother did thee bear;—
Rather a colic in the prince of air,
On dusky pinions borne o'er Æther's plain,
Expelled thee from him in a griping pain.
. . . . . .
Such was thy origin: such be thy fate—
To war 'gainst virtue with a deadly hate;
By daily slanders earn thy daily food,
Exalt the wicked, and depress the good;

And, having spent a lengthy life in evil
Return again unto thy parent devil!"[1]

VII.

A tremendous opportunity for the Tory satirists was furnished by what proved to be the military and naval anti-climax of the French alliance,—that grotesque and yet imposing combination of the autocrat of France with these fierce democrats of America whose political principles contained nothing which was not detestable to him. As to the Americans themselves, the immediate effects of the French alliance were to relax their own energies in the war, and to deepen still further that torpor, that supineness, that reluctance to make any more sacrifices for the Revolution, which had already grieved the heart and paralyzed the arm of Washington. That the king of France had resolved to pay off sundry old scores against his good brother, the king of England, by putting his own fleets and armies at the service of the American insurgents, was an announcement received in America by the most gleeful predictions of immediate and vast successes against the British arms on land and sea. For several years, however, these predictions failed to come true.

Thus, the first campaign, that of 1778, brought with it only such humiliations as the defeat at Monmouth, the failure of the French fleet to appear at the right time at the mouth of the Delaware, its failure to overcome the difficulty of an allied attack on New York, its failure, also, in the allied attack on Newport. In short, the first year of the French alliance had been a fiasco. In view of these facts, the Loyalists raised the cry of victory,—claiming that the

[1] "The New York Gazette," for August 11, 1779. This newspaper, printed by James Rivington, is the great reservoir for Loyalist humor and sarcasm during the Revolution. The files of that paper most used by me in these researches are those in the library of the N. Y. Historical Society, although I have also turned over copies to be seen elsewhere, as at Boston, Worcester, and Philadelphia.

rebel cause was ruined and was about to be abandoned. An example of this is furnished by a sprightly and good-humored song, to the tune of "Derry Down," which was printed in broadside, and was posted up in the streets of New York, and even of Philadelphia, in October, 1778. It is entitled "The Epilogue," and is supposed to be sung by the members of the Continental Congress at the conclusion of the farce "Independence," which they had been for several years so ingloriously playing:

"Our farce is now finished, your sport 's at an end!
But ere you depart, let the voice of a friend,
By way of a chorus, the evening crown
With a song to the tune of a hey derry down,
Derry down, down, hey derry down.

"Old Shakespeare, a poet who should not be spit on,
Although he was born in an island called Britain,
Hath said that mankind are all players at best—
A truth we 'll admit of, for sake of the jest.

"On this puny stage we 've strutted our hour,
And have acted our parts to the best of our power;
That the farce hath concluded—not perfectly well—
Was surely the fault of the Devil in Hell!

"This Devil you know, out of spleen to the Church,
Will oftentimes leave his best friends in the lurch,
And turn them adrift in the midst of their joy,—
'T is a difficult matter to cheat the Old Boy.

"Since this is the case, we must e'en make the best
Of a game that is lost: let us turn it to jest!
We 'll smile, nay, we 'll laugh, we 'll carouse, and we 'll sing,
And cheerfully drink life and health to the king.

"Let Washington now from his mountains descend—
Who knows but in George he may still find a friend?

A Briton, although he loves bottle and wench,
Is an honester fellow than parlé vous French.

"Our great 'Independence' we give to the wind,
And pray that Great Britain may once more be kind:
In this jovial song all hostility ends,
And Britons and we will forever be friends.

"Boys, fill me a bumper! now join in the chorus!
There is happiness still in the prospect before us.
In this sparkling glass, all hostility ends,
And Britons and we will for ever be friends!"[1]

As to the second campaign under the French alliance, that of 1779, its only successes—like those at Stony Point and Paulus Hook—were in slight actions from which the French were absent; its greatest disaster was in the only action of the year at which the French were present. For, after the affair off Newport in the preceding year, D'Estaing, having first gone into Boston harbor and there repaired his fleet, had flitted away to the West Indies, and thenceforward, for many months, was seen no more. In September of 1779, in response to American solicitations, he sailed for the coast of Georgia "with a fleet consisting of twenty sail of the line, two of fifty guns, and eleven frigates. As soon as his arrival was known, General Lincoln with the army under his command marched for Savannah. . . . Before the arrival of General Lincoln, Count D'Estaing demanded a surrender of the town to the arms of France. Prevost asked a suspension of hostilities twenty-four hours for preparing terms, and the request was incautiously granted. Before the stipulated time had elapsed, Lieutenant-Colonel Maitland, with about 800 men, after struggling with great difficulties, arrived from Beaufort, and joined the royal army at Savannah. . . . On the morning of the 4th of October, the batteries of the besiegers were opened with 9 mortars, 37 pieces of cannon from the

[1] The entire song is given in F. Moore, "Songs and Ballads," etc., 220–223.

land side, and 15 from the water. . . . It was determined to make an assault. . . . On the 9th of October, while two feints were made with the militia, a real attack was made on Spring Hill battery just as daylight appeared, with two columns consisting of 3500 French, 600 Continentals, and 350 of the inhabitants of Charleston. The principal of these columns, commanded by Count D'Estaing and General Lincoln, marched up boldly to the lines; but a heavy and well directed fire from the galleys threw the front of the column into confusion. The places of those who fell being instantly supplied by others, it still moved on until it reached a redoubt, where the contest became more fierce and desperate. . . . A French and an American standard were for an instant planted on the parapet; but the assailants, after sustaining the enemy's fire for fifty-five minutes, were ordered to retreat. Of the French, 637, and of the Continentals and militia, 241 were killed or wounded. Immediately after this unsuccessful assault, the militia almost universally went to their homes, and Count D'Estaing, reëmbarking his troops and artillery, left the continent." [1]

Such was the end of the second year of the French alliance; and at the festival of mirth which this event gave to the Loyalists, one of the dishes with which they regaled themselves was this jocular street-ballad telling the story of the allied attack on Savannah:

"With warlike parade,
And his Irish brigade,
His ships and his spruce Gallic host, sir,
As proud as an elf,
D'Estaing came himself,
And landed on Georgia's coast, sir.

"There joining a band,
Under Lincoln's command,

[1] A. Holmes, "Annals," etc., ii., 297–298.

Of rebels and traitors and Whigs, sir,
'Gainst the town of Savannah
He planted his banner,
And then he felt wondrous big, sir.

"With thund'ring of guns,
And bursting of bombs,
He thought to have frightened our boys, sir;
But amidst all their din,
Brave Maitland pushed in,
And Moncrieffe cried, 'A fig for your noise, sir!'

"Chagrined at delay,
As he meant not to stay,
The Count formed his troops in the morn, sir;
Van, centre, and rear
Marched up without fear,
Cocksure of success, by a storm, sir.

"Though rude was the shock,
Unmoved as a rock
Stood our firm British bands to their works, sir;
While the brave German corps
And Americans bore
Their parts as intrepid as Turks, sir.

"Then muskets did rattle,
Fierce ragèd the battle,
Grapeshot, it flew thicker than hail, sir;
The ditch filled with slain,
Blood dyed all the plain,
When rebels and French turnèd tail, sir.

. . . . . .

"There Pulaski fell,
That imp of old Bell,
Who attempted to murder his king, sir;
But now he is gone—

Whence he 'll never return,
But will make Hell with treason to ring, sir.

"To Charleston with fear,
The rebels repair;
D'Estaing scampers back to his boats, sir;
Each blaming the other,
Each cursing his brother,
And—may they cut each other's throats, sir."[1]

Upon the whole, the military events of the year 1779 bore so unfavorable an aspect for the Revolutionary cause as to give some ground for the enemy's claim that the rebels, cursed by the outstretched hand of France, had at last reached the penitential stage of the business; as is exemplified by this stanza from "A New Ballad," which made its first appearance in England that year:

"Our brethren so frantic,
Across the Atlantic,
Who quit their old friends in a huff,
In spite of their airs,
Are at last at their prayers,
And of fighting have had quantum suff."[2]

VIII.

It has been already mentioned that, after the Declaration of Independence, there was among the Loyalist writers a very general disuse of serious argument in their discussion of any part of the Anglo-American controversy. To this statement at least one exception must be made—having reference to a most solemn phase of the situation brought about by the open alliance of France with the insurgent Americans. Upon the entrance of their ancient and dreaded enemy as an ally of one branch of the English race then at war with the other branch of it, there seemed, indeed, not

[1] Given in full in F. Moore, "Songs and Ballads," etc., 269–273.
[2] Ibid., 263.

only the opportunity but the necessity both for serious argument and for brotherly and even pathetic expostulation on the part of the few Loyalist writers who were then available for the purpose. These writers, accordingly, then came forward with some very able and impressive papers appealing to their brethren in rebellion to stop and reconsider the whole subject of their duty and of their safety; especially, trying to make them see the unnaturalness of such a combination with France, and the fatal consequences which must ensue whether it should result in defeat or in victory.

Perhaps no better example of this class of writings can be given than the "Letters of Papinian," addressed severally to John Jay and to the people of North America, and setting forth "the conduct, present state, and prospects of the American Congress." The writer of these letters is commonly supposed to have been the Reverend Charles Inglis, then rector of Trinity Church, New York, who had already taken a vigorous part in the literary discussion of the proposal for American Independence. With no little cleverness, he here sets forth the tremendous assumptions of power made by the Revolutionary leaders, the gross tyrannies practised by them upon the common people, the fallacious hopes with which they had fed their credulous followers, and the delusions which they had spread through the land respecting the character and purpose of the so-called movement for American rights and liberties. "You find these pretended enemies of oppression the most unrelenting oppressors, and their little finger heavier than the king's loins." [1] "There is more liberty in Turkey than in the dominions of the Congress." [2] The rebellion, begun by unprincipled and selfish men, has been without justification in any public necessity; it is therefore wicked; it is without prospect of success; it is destined to bring disaster upon all who continue to support it.

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[1] "Letters of Papinian," 6.

[2] Ibid. 21.

Another of the grave Loyalist pamphlets of that period bears the title of "A Letter to the People of America." The chief force of this paper is spent upon the effort to call back into life the old feeling of American confidence in the essential fairness and good will of the English, and the old American distrust and hatred of the French; and thus to induce the mass of the American people, fatally misled by Congress, to rise in their might, to overthrow that body of usurpers, and to restore the country to its natural and safe relations with the people of Great Britain.

IX.

The awful possibilities involved in the French alliance, as seriously portrayed by several Loyalist pamphleteers, were also exploited in livelier or more lurid colors by numberless minor writers for the Tory press. "Of course," said they, in substance, to their hostile brethren, "the determination of Great Britain to put down this rebellion of yours is strengthened a thousandfold by the interference of France in the quarrel. Let it be granted, however, for the sake of the argument, that by the help of France, you do succeed! What then? You will be worse off than if you had failed! Instead of England, a faithful and loving mother, even though at times a severe one, you will have France, a treacherous and cruel stepmother; instead of the usages of the English constitutional monarchy, you will be subject to the simplicity of French absolutism; instead of a ruling power kindred to you in blood, in language, in religion, you will be under a ruling power alien from you in all these particulars; and within ten years from the time that you shall have gained, by the aid of France, your release from England, you will be wrapped in the terrific embrace of a despotism that will know no limit and no pity. An absolute dominion over you will be set up by your late protectors; an American Bastille will be erected; the Romish religion will be established; the English language

will be forbidden; the French language will be made the language of the country; and the maxims and proceedings of the French monarchy, of the French civil code, and of the Romish inquisition will be your reward for your infinite ingratitude and folly in casting off the enlightened, humane, and equitable authority of you rightful sovereign."

The most striking elements of this Loyalist appeal to race sympathies, to religious prejudices, even to not unreasonable fears, may now be seen by us as they were set forth in most realistic fashion, in 1779, in the form of a pretended forecast of what was to be written down by some literal and fact-loving diarist in America just ten years after that date:

"Boston, November 10, 1789.—His Excellency, Count Tyran, has this day published, by authority from his majesty, a proclamation for the suppression of heresy and establishment of the inquisition in this town, which has already begun its functions in many other places of the continent under his majesty's dominion.

"The use of the Bible in the vulgar tongue is strictly prohibited, on pain of being punished by discretion of the inquisition.

"November 11.—The Catholic religion is not only outwardly professed, but has made the utmost progress among all ranks of people here, owing, in a great measure, to the unwearied labors of the Dominican and Franciscan friars, who omit no opportunity of scattering the seeds of religion, and converting the wives and daughters of heretics. We hear that the building formerly called the Old South Meeting, is fitting up for a cathedral, and that several other old meeting-houses are soon to be repaired for converts.

"November 12.—This day being Sunday, the famous Samuel Adams read his recantation of heresy, after which he was present at mass, and we hear he will soon receive priest's orders to qualify him for a member of the American Sorbonne. . . .

"The king has been pleased to order that five thousand of

the inhabitants of Massachusetts Bay should be drafted to supply his garrisons in the West Indies; the officers for them are already arrived from France.

. . . . . .

" New York, November 15.—The edict for prohibiting the use of the English language, and establishing that of the French in all law proceedings, will take place on the 20th instant. At the same time, the ordinance for abolishing trials by juries, and introducing the imperial law, will begin to take effect. . . .

" November 17.—A criminal of importance, who has been long imprisoned in the New Bastille, was this day privately beheaded. He commanded the American forces against Great Britain for a considerable time, but was confined by order of government on suspicion of possessing a dangerous influence in a country newly conquered, and not thoroughly settled. . . .

" The king has been pleased to parcel out a great part of the lands in America to noblemen of distinction, who will grant them again to the peasantry upon leases at will, with the reservation of proper rents and services.

" His majesty has been graciously pleased to order that none of the natives of America shall keep any firearms in their possession, upon pain of being sentenced to the galleys. . . .

" November 22.—We hear from Williamsburg, in Virginia, that some commotions took place there when the new capitation tax was first executed. But the regiment of Bretagne, being stationed in that neighborhood, speedily suppressed them by firing upon the populace, and killing fifty on the spot. It is hoped that this example will prevent any future insurrection in that part of the country.

" November 23.—His majesty has directed his viceroy to send five hundred sons of the principal inhabitants of America, to be educated in France, where the utmost care will be taken to imbue them with a regard for the Catholic faith, and a due sense of subordination to government.

"It is ordered that all the trade of America shall be carried on in French bottoms, navigated by French seamen.

"Such is the glorious specimen of happiness to be enjoyed by America, in case the interposition of France shall enable her to shake off her dependence on Great Britain. 'Di talem avertite casum.'"[1]

Certainly, it is not easy for us Americans, more than a hundred years after that dreadful prophecy was uttered, and after every atom of its dire burden has been falsified by the facts of actual experience, to realize how awful, in 1779, was the possibility that it might be exactly fulfilled, and with what an ineffable anxiety, with what a sinking of the heart, with how horrible a dread, it must have been read by many thousands of Americans at a time when no mortal man could know whether or not it would come true. Nevertheless, it is through such a writing as this, that we may be enabled to enter more truly into the very history of our Revolution—to know something more of that history than what lies on the surface, than what was enacted in physical battles,—even the invisible, the spiritual, battles of the men and women who favored or who opposed the Revolution, the agony that was year by year in their souls, the grim campaigns they had to wage against imposing arguments, against towering scorn, against the most appalling threats, and the chances of a doom that carried with it almost every conceivable calamity.

X.

The impolicy of the French alliance was taken up in the gravest spirit, in 1781, by an eminent American politician who has never been classed among the American Loyalists. By the spring of that year, the record of American experience under the French alliance had remained still unbroken by a single example of success, on land or sea, in any way due

[1] "The New York Gazette," March 17, 1779, reprinted in F. Moore, "Diary of the Am. Rev.," ii., 148–150.

to the help of French battalions or of French ships. Then it was that Silas Deane, a graduate of Yale College, a member of the first and of the second Continental Congress, and from 1776 to 1778 employed by Congress as its diplomatic and commercial agent in France, wrote a series of nine or ten letters to as many different men in America, with the view of convincing them that the whole project for American Independence had been a mistake, that the alliance with France was a disaster, and that a speedy reconciliation with England on terms acceptable to both was the only means left by which America could escape from the doom to which she was then hurrying. These letters are well-written, plausible, powerful; and had it not been for the favorable turn given to American affairs by the capture of Cornwallis's army a few months after they were written, they might have had serious effects. They were, however, collected and published in 1782[1]; but as, by that time, the success of the Revolution was assured, their prophecies of its failure, and their lamentations over the fatal blunder of having ever undertaken it, sounded very much like the ravings of a madman bewailing calamities which existed only in his own diseased brain.

[1] "Paris Papers, or, Mr. Silas Deane's late intercepted Letters." The most important of the private papers of Deane, edited by Mr. Charles Isham, have been published by the N. Y. Historical Society, forming three volumes of its "Collections," for 1886, 1887, and 1888.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE LITERARY WARFARE OF THE LOYALISTS AGAINST INDEPENDENCE: JOSEPH STANSBURY, TORY SONG-WRITER AND SATIRIST.

I.—The special difficulty of identifying the writers of Tory productions, whether serious or jocose—The preëminence of Joseph Stansbury as a writer of political songs and of playful political satires—His personal history—A favorite in the society of Philadelphia.

II.—Like all other Loyalists, he disapproved of the colonial policy of the home-government—His verses, about 1774, "On the Present Troubles"—His effort to keep alive the feeling of American kinship with England—His songs for the banquet of the Sons of St. George, 1771, and 1774.

III.—Stansbury draws back from the policy of carrying resistance to the point of separation—His epigram on a fiery Whig preacher, 1776—Takes refuge with the British army in New York, where he remains from 1778 till 1783—His activity as a writer of convivial political verse during those years—His war song, "The Lords of the Main," 1780.

IV.—His "New Song," on the inconsistencies of the champions of freedom in America—His song for "A Venison Dinner," 1781—His effort to keep up confidence in the suppression of the rebellion—Loyalist criticisms on the inactivity of the British generals—His satire on Sir Henry Clinton.

V.—Stansbury's optimism survives all the misfortunes of the war—"A Poetical Epistle to His Wife," 1780—"Liberty"—"Let Us be Happy as Long as We Can," 1782—Loyalist devotion to principle, even under defeat and ruin—Stansbury's lines in 1783, "God Save the King"—His inability to keep up the resentments of the war—His poetic irenicon—Homesick in Nova Scotia—His return to his old home as a reconstructed American Loyalist.

I.

AMONG writers on both sides of the Revolutionary controversy, the habit of anonymous publication was the prevailing one; but for obvious reasons of prudence, this habit was adhered to with peculiar strictness among writers on the Loyalist side—more especially among writers of lam-

poons and of other humorous and caustic pieces against the champions of the Revolution. The mass of such productions, so far as they have survived to our time in broadsides, in pamphlets, and in the files of a few newspapers, still defy all attempts to assign them to their several authors. Indeed, it is chiefly by means of the bitter allusions made by the Revolutionist writers to some of these facetious Tory penmen, that we now know even of the existence, in those days, of such masters of political sarcasm as Will Molineux, Dr. Young, Joseph Greenleaf, Sam Waterhouse, Vardell, and Isaac Hunt, the father of Leigh Hunt.

Of all the Loyalist verse-writers whose work can now in some measure be identified are two of chief eminence,—Joseph Stansbury and Jonathan Odell. As a satirist, no one on that side of the controversy approaches Odell, either in passionate energy of thought or in pungency and polish of style; while Stansbury is equally without a rival among his brethren as a writer of festive political songs, and of satire in verse characterized by playful humor rather than by hatred.

Born in 1740 in London, and for several years a very brilliant pupil in St. Paul's School, Joseph Stansbury[1] was early taken from the career of letters—for which he had quite unusual gifts—and was put into trade. In 1767, he came to America, and established himself in business in Philadelphia. Into the life of that cultivated and genial city he entered with instant sympathy. Being a young man of high character and of many literary and social accomplishments, he had not long to wait for acquaintance. He had great facility in the writing of songs, which he sang with a melodious voice and with much vivacity of expres-

[1] For materials relating to Stansbury, my principal sources are, the rare volume, admirably edited by Winthrop Sargent, and entitled "The Loyal Verses of Joseph Stansbury and Dr. Jonathan Odell"; also an unpublished biographical sketch of Stansbury written by his son, Arthur Joseph Stansbury, and copied "with but slight alteration" by Mr. Fred H. Wines of Springfield, Illinois, a grandson of the poet. For this manuscript I am indebted to Mrs. Jeanne Stansbury Holden of Detroit, who is one of the poet's granddaughters.

sion; and wherever he went, he was welcomed not only for his intelligence and his fine manners, but for the kindling zest and good cheer which he brought with him into all companies.

II.

Like the most of those Americans who refused to join in the final measures of opposition, he seems to have regarded the colonial policy of the home-government as very impolitic—a policy which was persisted in just long enough to spoil the old good humor of the colonists, and to ripen irritation into revolution. For example, there remains among his papers the fragment of a serious and rather stately song, "On the Present Troubles," written apparently after the ministry had pushed their colonial policy to the extremity of blood-shedding, but before the colonists had pushed their opposition to the extremity of Independence. Evidently, in that stage of the business, Stansbury's sympathies were strongly with the colonists. This song begins with a picture of Great Britain in the height and splendor of her wide lordship over the earth:

"On crystal throne, uplifted high,
Imperial Britain sate;
Her lofty forehead reached the sky,
Her awful nod was fate.
. . . . . .
Bright science made her name adored;
Her robes the arts impearled;
Wide in her lap fair commerce poured
The riches of the world."

But suddenly, according to the poet, a change is visible in the aspect of this superb creature,—a change due to the birth in her heart, first, of jealousy toward her own American children, and then of the dreadful purpose to treat them with harshness and even with cruelty:

"Her cheeks the rose in haste forsook,
By jealous fears pursued;
Her voice the earth's firm basement shook,
And turned the air to blood.
Her vengeance o'er the liquid wave
Explores these western climes:
Just Heaven! a people deign to save—
Whose wrongs are all their crimes."[1]

If, indeed, things have come to such a pass with the colonists that their "wrongs are all their crimes," what shall hinder this poet who says so from going on with his high-spirited companions who will presently insist that for these wrongs the only remedy is in Independence? Only this shall hinder: that Stansbury does not see that Independence is the only remedy for those wrongs, or even the best remedy! Another remedy, and a better one, as he thinks, lies in firm but constitutional opposition, that is, opposition inside the empire and not outside of it: in opposition, then, and not in secession. Therefore, that his fellow-colonists may not forget all this, nor commit the irreparable mistake, he would stir in their hearts, not only their love of liberty, but likewise their old sense of affectionate kinship to the mother land, and of pride in the splendid historic achievements of their race. Thus, it is not hard to imagine with what élan he must have sung, at the banquet of the American "Sons of St. George" in New York, in April, 1771, this song of his, to the tune of the "Black Sloven":

"Though placed at a distance from Britain's bold shore,
From thence either we or our fathers came o'er;
And in will, word, and deed we are Englishmen all,—
Still true to her cause, and awake to her call.

"Let Crécy, Poictiers, and let Agincourt show
How our ancestors acted some ages ago;

[1] "The Loyal Verses," etc., 3.

While Minden's red field, and Quebec, shall proclaim
That their sons are unchanged, or in nature or name.

. . . . . .

"Though party contentions awhile may run high,
When danger advances, they 'll vanish and die;
While all with one heart, hand, and spirit unite,
Like Englishmen think, and like Englishmen fight.

"Then here 's to our king—and oh, long may he reign,
The lord of those men who are lords of the main!
While all the contention among us shall be,
To make him as happy, as we are made free." [1]

This song, praying as it does, that the happiness of the king may be proportioned to the extent of his willingness to grant true British freedom to his American colonists, contains not a word which, in that year 1771, could not have been sung with all heartiness by Jefferson or Franklin, by John Adams or John Jay.

Three years afterward, in the midst of the political exasperation connected with the tea-business, Stansbury wrote another song, apparently for an occasion similar to the one just mentioned, and this time to that stirring tune, "Hearts of Oak," then in use wherever over the earth the English race had wandered. Here, also, by an appeal to the thrilling memories of race-kinship and of race-glory, he tries to sing his brother-colonists out of the slough of angry contention into which this miserable affair has plunged them, and to induce them, if possible, to deal with the difficulty in the larger and happier moods of patriotic Englishmen, especially in those robust days when their nourishment was beef and beer, and not such effeminate concoctions as are in his time offered to them for food and drink. If we care to fancy to ourselves this manly and gracious singer as he

[1] "The Loyal Verses," etc., 1–2, where the entire song is given.

stood up among the "Sons of St. George" at their banquet in 1774, and with full-throated voice poured out the leading lines of this song, it will not be hard for us, also, to hear the very roar of old-fashioned enthusiasm with which its chorus was caught up and repeated by his fellow-patriots around him:

"When good Queen Elizabeth governed the realm,
And Burleigh's sage counsels directed the helm,
In vain Spain and France our conquests opposed,—
For valor conducted what wisdom proposed.
Beef and beer was their food;
Love and truth armed their band;
Their courage was ready—
Steady, boys, steady—
To fight and to conquer by sea and by land.

"But since tea and coffee, so much to our grief,
Have taken the place of strong beer and roast beef,
Our laurels have withered, our trophies been torn,
And the lions of England French triumphs adorn.
Tea and slops are their food—
Which[1] unnerve every hand;
Their courage unsteady
And not always ready—
They often are conquered by sea and by land.

"St. George views with transport our generous flame:—
'My sons, rise to glory, and rival my fame;
Ancient manners again in my sons I behold,
And this age must eclipse all the ages of gold.'

. . . . . .

"While thus we regale, as our fathers of old,—
Our manners as simple, our courage as bold,—
May vigor and prudence our freedom secure,
Long as rivers, or ocean, or stars shall endure.

[1] The text reads "They."

Beef and beer are our food;
Love and truth arm our band;
Our courage is steady,
And always is ready
To fight and to conquer by sea and by land."[1]

III.

Stansbury's aspiration, that "vigor and prudence" may "our freedom secure," is one which could have been uttered equally well by both parties in the dispute; but for him, throughout the entire song, the note of race-unity seems to have drowned that of political suspicion. Accordingly, we are prepared to find two years later, when the plan for race-separation becomes the master-purpose of American politics, that Stansbury shrinks back from a project so shocking both to his affections and to his judgment. Even then, however, in his denunciations of this ultimate heresy of Independence, he is true to the mirthful mood which was habitual to him; as may be seen, for example, in an epigram written by him probably in May or June, 1776, on a fierce political sermon preached just then by a rebel friend of his, the Reverend William Piercy, to a battalion of the Philadelphia militia. The day, as it happened, was excessively hot; and while the preacher was delivering his discourse, there stood behind him in the pulpit a negro servant, remarkably black and remarkably ugly, who fanned the preacher with a vehemence well proportioned to the inflammatory energy of the harangue. Four lines were enough for Stansbury's comment upon the spectacle:

"To preach up, friend Piercy, at this critical season,
Resistance to Britain, is not very civil;
Yet what can we look for but faction and treason,
From a flaming enthusiast—fanned by the devil?"[2]

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[1] "The Loyal Verses," etc., 4–5.

[2] Ibid. 6.

Notwithstanding the sharp discriminations caused by the famous procedure of July 4, 1776, Stansbury seems to have maintained both his residence and his business in Philadelphia during the whole of that year and of the year following. Of course, upon the occupation of the city by the British army in the autumn of 1777, he was in high favor. On the retirement of the British army from Philadelphia in the spring of 1778, Stansbury prudently went with it; and thenceforward, until the close of the war, his quarters were within the British lines at New York.

Just how he was employed during those years, is not certainly known. At any rate, whatever else he may have been doing, there is good reason for the statement that his clever and jovial pen was constantly at the service of the cause to which he had given himself with a devotion none the less sincere because altogether free from bitterness. It is probable that much of his printed work during this period is now quite beyond identification. Moreover, at the close of the Revolution, he burned a large number of his private papers relating to that period, and, by this act, put it out of our power to trace more perfectly just what he did in those days as a satirist and a song-writer. Nevertheless, enough remains of his ascertained work to enable us to feel sure that few aspects of the ever-changing situation between 1776 and 1783, could have escaped his keen and humorous attention, or could have failed to receive treatment at his hands either in some stirring lyric of patriotic enthusiasm, or in some form of bantering verse. Thus, fair examples of his range may be seen in the "Welcome to Howe,"[1] June, 1776; in the "Tradesmen's Song,"[2] for the king's birthday, 1777; in the "Song for the Times,"[3] and in "The Church and King Club,"[4] in 1778; in the rather caustic ballad of "The Town Meeting,"[5] 1779; in "Liberty,"[6] and "A Poetical Epistle,"[7] in 1780; in "A Song for St.

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[1] "The Loyal Verses," etc., 10–11. [2] Ibid. 13–14. [3] Ibid. 34–35.
[4] Ibid. 36. [5] Ibid. 39–44. [6] Ibid. 63–64. [7] Ibid. 69–70.

George's Day,"[1] and in "The Royal Oak,"[2] 1781; and in "A Christmas Song,"[3] 1782.

Probably the strongest example of Stansbury's work as a writer of war-lyrics, is his spirit-stirring song called "The Lords of the Main," published in February, 1780, and intended for the use of the British sailors then engaged in fighting their ancient foes, the French and the Spaniards, at that time in alliance for the help of the American Congress —here alluded to under its derisive nickname of "Congo":

"When Faction, in league with the treacherous Gaul,
Began to look big, and paraded in state,
A meeting was held at Credulity Hall,[4]
And Echo proclaimed their ally good and great.
By sea and by land
Such wonders are planned—
No less than the bold British lion to chain!
'Well hove!' says Jack Lanyard,
'French, Congo, and Spaniard,
Have at you!—remember, we 're Lords of the Main.
Lords of the Main, aye, Lords of the Main;
The Tars of Old England are Lords of the Main.'

"Though party-contention awhile may perplex,
And lenity hold us in doubtful suspense,
If perfidy rouse, or ingratitude vex,
In defiance of hell we 'll chastise the offense.
When danger alarms,
'T is then that in arms
United we rush on the foe with disdain;
And when the storm rages,
It only presages
Fresh triumphs to Britons as Lords of the Main!
Lords of the Main, aye, Lords of the Main—
Let thunder proclaim it, we 're Lords of the Main!'

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[1] "The Loyal Verses," etc., 76–77.
[2] Ibid. 81–82.
[3] Ibid. 84–85.
[4] Independence Hall, Philadelphia.

"Then, Britons, strike home—make sure of your blow:
The chase is in view—never mind a lea shore.
With vengeance o'ertake the confederate foe:
'T is now we may rival our heroes of yore!
Brave Anson, and Drake,
Hawke, Russell, and Blake,
With ardor like yours, we defy France and Spain!
Combining with treason,
They 're deaf to all reason;
Once more let them feel we are Lords of the Main.
Lords of the Main, aye, Lords of the Main—
The first-born of Neptune are Lords of the Main!"[1]

IV.

A frequent taunt of the Loyalists had reference to the arbitrary and even despotic measures often resorted to by the Revolutionary leaders in pushing forward their cause—which yet called itself the cause of freedom; and in some verses which he entitled a "New Song," Stansbury gave those Americans who resented such inconsistency the words wherein to confess the political disenchantment through which they were then passing. This is one stanza of the song:

"We fondly imagined that all future story
Should tell of our justice, our freedom, and glory;
We laughed at oppression—not dreaming or fearing
That men should be banished without charge or hearing.
For freedom, indeed, we supposed we were fighting—
But this sort of freedom 's not very inviting."[2]

Nothing that we now have of Stansbury's verse, presents him to us in a vein more characteristic or more attractive than a sparkling convivial song which he wrote for "A Venison Dinner at Mr. Bunyan's," in New York, in 1781,

[1] "The Loyal Verses," etc., 61–62, where is given a fourth stanza.
[2] "The Loyal Verses," etc., 16–17.

at a time of the year when Washington's headquarters were still in the highlands of the Hudson, and before that impenitent rebel had developed to the enemy his purpose of marching toward Virginia for an interview with Cornwallis:

"Friends, push round the bottle, and let us be drinking,
While Washington up in his mountains is slinking:
Good faith, if he 's wise he 'll not leave them behind him,
For he knows he 's safe nowheres where Britons can find him.
When he and Fayette talk of taking this city,
Their vaunting moves only our mirth and our pity.

"But, though near our lines they 're too cautious to tarry,
What courage they shew when a hen-roost they harry!
Who can wonder that poultry and oxen and swine
Seek shelter in York from such valor divine,—
While Washington's jaws and the Frenchman's are aching
The spoil they have lost, to be boiling and baking.

"Let Clinton and Arnold bring both to subjection,
And send us more geese here to seek our protection.
Their flesh and their feathers shall meet a kind greeting;
A fat rebel turkey is excellent eating,
A lamb fat as butter, and white as a chicken—
These sorts of tame rebels are excellent pickin'.

"To-day a wild rebel has smoked on the table;
You 've cut him and sliced him as long as you 're able.
He bounded like Congo,[1] and bade you defiance,
And placed on his running his greatest reliance;
But fate overtook him and brought him before ye,
To shew how rebellion will wind up her story.

"Then cheer up, my lads! if the prospect grows rougher,
Remember from whence and for whom 't is you suffer:—

[1] The common Tory nickname for the Continental Congress, whose agility in flight at the approach of the British is likened to that of this deer when pursued by the hunters.

From men whom mild laws and too happy condition
Have puffed up with pride and inflamed with sedition;
For George, whose reluctance to punish offenders
Has strengthened the hands of these upstart pretenders." [1]

This confident and jubilant tone on the part of the Loyalists within the British lines, belonged to a mood which was attained by them now and then, upon casual flashes of good fortune in the field, or upon occasions of special hilarity—as a venison dinner or the like; but their spirits were not commonly or without effort at so high a level. There is now something of the aspect of tragedy upon the words which they kept uttering to one another, in so many forms, day after day, and from year to year,—wherein they tried to make it appear to themselves that their affairs were going on prosperously, that the British generals were masters of the situation, that the French alliance and the Spanish conjunction were to be for the rebel Congress but futile copartnerships, and that soon—yes, very soon—this enormous and ghastly farce of American Independence would dissolve into its natural nothingness. Thus, in 1778, after the French had become avowed participants in the fight, Joseph Stansbury exclaims,—

"What though the Frenchman crowns the scene,
And we miscall him 'mankind's friend,'
Not all his power can rebels screen—
Rebellion 's drawing near her end.
Shot like a meteor through the skies,
It spread awhile a baleful train;
But now, by Jove's command, it dies,
And melts to common air again." [2]

Nevertheless, as we have now the means of knowing, these people were not really at ease. As the war dragged on, as one campaign of military shiftlessness and blundering succeeded to another, as the rebellion of their late brethren remained still uncrushed, and the end they hoped for kept

[1] "The Loyal Verses," etc., 79–80.

[2] Ibid. 34–35.

receding further and still further into the distance, the unhappy Loyalists became but too well acquainted with that form of heart-sickness which is born of hope deferred. For the immediate and complete suppression of the rebellion, no British general had a zeal that could match with their fiery impatience, or that did not seem listless by comparison with the flame and the wrath and the rancor of their devotion to it. In their demand for prompt and conclusive action, in their eagerness to have something done—to have the day seized, the occasion used, to have the rebels pushed and routed and crushed—they often turned in bitterness even upon the British generals themselves, muttering sullenly and helplessly at their procrastination, their self-indulgence, their lack of enterprise, their spiritless and fruitless methods. To the Loyalists, the war, as thus conducted, seemed to be not a war, but only a hypocritical and distressing pretense of one.

It is not likely that Joseph Stansbury, who was himself within the lines at New York and a member of the innermost circle of Loyalist counselors, failed to see and to feel all these defects in British military leadership; and yet, in giving vent to his criticism thereupon, he but obeyed the law of his own mind by doing so with good humor and with the light play of badinage rather than the fury of railing accusations. A capital instance of his way of applying sarcasms to the delinquencies of his own chiefs, is furnished by an occurrence of the year 1780. Just then, the rebels in the vicinity of New York seem to have become so perfectly assured of the preference of the British army for the contemplative over the active life, that they sometimes pushed their foraging expeditions even within the British lines, on one occasion carrrying off sundry quantities of hay from the very outskirts of the city and setting fire to some houses which were so near that the flames could be seen from Sir Henry Clinton's quarters. Of course, such exploits of brilliant and unwhipt audacity, and Sir Henry's apparent indifference to them, were inexpressibly galling to the Loy-

alists who stood looking on. Of course, each one gave vent to his disgust in his own way; and Joseph Stansbury's way was to write and post up in the streets of the town this pasquinade:

"'Has the Marquis La Fayette
Taken off all our hay yet?'
Says Clinton to the wise heads around him:
'Yes, faith, Sir Harry,
Each stack he did carry,
And likewise the cattle—confound him!

"'Besides, he now goes,
Just under your nose,
To burn all the houses to cinder.'
'If that be his project,
It is not an object
Worth a great man's attempting to hinder.

"'For forage and house
I care not a louse;
For revenge, let the Loyalists bellow:
I swear I 'll not do more
To keep them in humor,
Than play on my violoncello.

"'Since Charleston is taken,
'T will sure save my bacon,—
I can live a whole year on that same, sir;
Ride about all the day,
At night, concert or play;
So a fig for the men that dare blame, sir;

"'If growlers complain,
I inactive remain—
Will do nothing, nor let any others!
'T is sure no new thing
To serve thus our king—
Witness Burgoyne, and two famous Brothers!'"[1]

[1] "The Loyal Verses," etc., 67–68.

V.

The optimism of Stansbury seems to have been more than equal to the disasters which thickened about him and about the doomed political party with whose fortunes he had allied his own; and it was perhaps not the least of the services to which his life was put during those years, that he could be a messenger of indomitable hope and cheerfulness to many noble-minded and sensitive people who were associated with him in misfortune, but who lacked his genius for confronting it. Thus, late in the year 1780, in "A Poetical Epistle . . . to His Wife," he compresses into five lines of verse a large part of his secret for meeting the ills of this mortal state:

> "But prudence suggests we should never despair;
> And reason points out that good humor and patience
> Are better companions than half our relations,—
> Take off the rough edge of ill-nature and malice,
> And make our dark prison as gay as a palace."[1]

Somewhat more of his secret he had also revealed, a few months earlier, in a little poem called "Liberty," wherein he thus gives us to understand what, in his opinion, were the things in this world worth living for:

> "Splendid honors I disdain;
> Crowns of kings are lined with pain;
> Friendship only gives to me
> Social joys and liberty.
> Let me in my humble sphere,
> Free from envy, free from care,
> Spend the days allotted me
> Blest with peace and liberty."[2]

Of course all his fortitude was brought to the supreme test by the surrender of Cornwallis in 1781, whereby it was

[1] "The Loyal Verses," etc., 69.

[2] Ibid. 64.

made apparent to the rest of the world that the stake for which he and his friends had been playing was lost,—that nothing was in store for them but to be banished from the land and the homes they loved as dearly as did the men who were victorious over them. It was amid such calamities that Stansbury wrote, apparently for some assemblage of Loyalists in New York, this song, in which his optimism, driven to its last refuge, still refuses to yield:

"I 've heard in old times that a sage used to say,
The seasons were nothing, December, or May;
The heat, or the cold never entered his plan—
That all should be happy whenever they can.

"No matter what power directed the state,
He looked upon such things as ordered by fate:
Whether governed by many, or ruled by one man,
His rule was—be happy whenever you can.

"He happened to enter this world the same day
With the supple, complying, famed Vicar of Bray:
Through both of their lives the same principle ran—
My boys, we 'll be happy as long as we can.

"Time-serving I hate, yet I see no good reason
A leaf from their book should be thought out of season:
When kicked like a football from Sheba to Dan—
Egad, let 's be happy as long as we can.

"Since no man can tell what to-morrow may bring,
Or which side shall triumph, the Congress or King,
Since fate must o'errule us and carry her plan—
Why, let us be happy as long as we can.

"To-night, let 's enjoy this good wine and a song,
And relish the hour which we cannot prolong:
If evil will come, we 'll adhere to our plan—
And baffle misfortune as long as we can." [1]

[1] "Loyal Verses," etc., 86–87.

And when at last the English ministry, to the bitter grief of the king, made peace with the victorious rebels—conceding to them all that they had ever demanded—even then Stansbury and his fellow-Loyalists, having lost everything in the world but their loyalty, seemed to cling with a stern and a proud happiness to that ultimate and inextinguishable possession:

"Though ruined so deeply no angel can save,
The empire dismembered, our king made a slave,
Still loving, revering, we shout forth honestly—
God save the king!
Though fated to banishment, poverty, death,
Our hearts are unaltered, and with our last breath
Loyal to George, we 'll pray most fervently—
Glory and joy crown the king!" [1]

After the war was really ended, however, the party of the Loyalists gradually fell into two groups,—those who were willing to become reconciled to the result of the war, and those who forever refused. It was inevitable that Stansbury should take his place in the former group. In his heart was no lodging-place for the resentments of the old controversy. Upon the back of the very sheet on which he had written his "God Save the King," he wrote these lines of his irenicon:

"Now this war at length is o'er,
Let us think of it no more;
Every party lie or name,
Cancel as our mutual shame;
Bid each wound of faction close—
Blushing we were ever foes." [2]

Then it was, that whatever of his political verses he could lay his hands upon, he destroyed. "He even seemed to forget who had hated, and who had injured him." [3] Sup-

[1] "Loyal Verses," etc., 89. [2] Ibid. 89. [3] Ibid. 102.

posing that as between himself and his former political antagonists, this forgetfulness would be mutual, he removed with his family to a small village in New Jersey, a few miles to the east of Philadelphia; but before he had been there a week, he was seized and thrown into Burlington jail. From this he was soon released on giving his promise to leave the State within nine days.[1] Accordingly, in August, 1783, he set sail from New York for Nova Scotia, where thousands of his exiled political brethren were then beginning to make for themselves a new home and a new country. But Stansbury was not happy there. To his wife he wrote:

"Believe me, love, this vagrant life,
O'er Nova Scotia's wilds to roam,
While far from children, friends, or wife,
Or place that I can call a home,
Delights not me;—another way
My treasures, pleasures, wishes lay."[2]

In the autumn of 1785, he returned once more to Philadelphia, intending to resume his old business there; but into a house where he was supposed to lodge was thrown a letter, intimating that it would not be possible for him to live in Philadelphia, although, as was also hinted, it might be possible for him to die there.[3] After some years of insecurity, he found at last in 1793,[4] in the cosmopolitan largeness of New York, the home he had longed for; and there in serenity, and amid hosts of friends, he passed the remainder of his days, an altogether pleasant specimen of a reconstructed American Loyalist.

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[1] MS. sketch by Arthur Joseph Stansbury. [2] "The Loyal Verses," 90.
[3] Ibid. 101. [4] MS. sketch by A. J. Stansbury.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE LITERARY WARFARE OF THE LOYALISTS AGAINST AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE: JONATHAN ODELL, THEIR CHIEF SATIRIST.

I.—Odell's position among the Loyalist writers—His relentless spirit in satire described by himself—His New England ancestry—Surgeon in the British army before the Revolution—In 1767, he takes holy orders in London—His settlement as rector of Burlington, New Jersey.

II.—Odell disapproves of the American policy of the ministry, but would meet it by constitutional opposition only—Takes no public part in the controversy till after the beginning of hostilities — Outrage upon his private correspondence—His ode for the king's birthday, June 4, 1776—His parole to remain within his parish—Having given fresh offense, he is hunted from his hiding-places—His flight within the British lines, late in December, 1776.

III.—Odell received into confidence at the British headquarters—Remains in New York till the close of the war—Chaplain to a corps of Loyalist troops —His conception of the proper use of satire in controversy, after serious argument has been exhausted—His chief satires, "The Word of Congress," September, 1779; "The Congratulation," and "The Feu de Joie," November, 1779; and "The American Times," 1780.

IV.—Odell follows the models of English classical satire—He is the great exponent of Loyalist conscience and emotion in the last years of the war—The basis of their political system of politics and of patriotic duty—Odell denounces both the ministerial policy and American violence in resisting it —The Revolution not a case of justifiable rebellion—A popular phrensy produced by political sorcery—The sorcerers discovered by the poet in the very act of compounding the hell-broth of rebellion—Its ingredients.

V.—The futile efforts of sane men to stop the spread of Revolutionary madness —The perpetual renewal of error, even when discomfited—The inexhaustible supply of rebel chiefs—American society given over to the rule of the worst—Description of the Continental Congress—That body the centre of all political mischief, a nest of robbers and tyrants.

VI.—His arraignment of Congress for its duplicity—It is a political Proteus—He satirizes its servants, as Thomas Paine, and General John Sullivan—He arraigns the chiefs of the rebellion, as William Livingston, John Jay, Samuel Chase, Robert Morris, and Gouverneur Morris.

VII.—His attacks on Lord Sterling, Pulaski, and President Witherspoon—Comprehensiveness of his attacks—A partial relenting toward Henry Laurens—His solemn indictment of Washington.

VIII.—Odell's perfect confidence in the ultimate defeat of the rebellion—His song for the king's birthday, 1777—His prediction, in the autumn of 1778, of the speedy discomfiture of the rebels and of their French allies—"The Old Year and the New—a Prophecy"—The two sections of the Loyalist party at the close of the Revolution—The implacable section represented by Odell—His later career in Nova Scotia.

I.

WE now come to the most powerful and most unrelenting of the Tory satirists,—to Jonathan Odell, who, though closely allied to Joseph Stansbury in the objects for which he wrote, yet greatly differed from his associate both in the spirit and in the method of his writing. Being of a nature far deeper, sterner, and more virile than Stansbury's, less lovable, less mobile, less capable of any sort of moral concession for the sake of amenity, Odell reprobated so profoundly the later movement of the Revolution that it was seldom possible for him to relax into any sort of playfulness in speaking of it, or to admit it to the honors of even a semi-sarcastic dalliance, or to attack it with any species of satire other than that which was grim, scathing, absolutely implacable. He was faithful to his own ideal, when to a brother writer he said:

> "Thou, to the bottom, probe the dangerous sore,
> And in the wound the friendly balsam pour;
> Enough for me the caustic to apply,
> Twinge the proud flesh, and draw the face awry."[1]

And when he had occasion to implore the goddess of satire to aid him in his chosen task, it was with a true consciousness of his peculiar function as a satirist, that he prayed this prayer:

[1] "The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 24.

"then grant me for a time
Some deleterious powers of acrid rhyme;
Some ars'nic verse, to poison with the pen
These rats, who nestle in the lion's den."[1]

In short, Odell's place among the Tory satirists corresponds pretty closely to that of Philip Freneau among the satirists on the side of the Whigs. Certainly, to him, of all the American verse-writers who opposed the Revolution, may best be applied the title which Sir Walter Scott invented for the purpose of doing honor to a certain Bishop of Llandaff —that of Toryissimus.[2]

Odell was born at Newark, New Jersey, on the 25th of September, 1737. His earliest American ancestor, William Odell, was among the founders of the colony of Massachusetts, and was living at Concord in 1639. Thus, the most inappeasable satirist of the American Revolution — the stanchest and fiercest champion of the principle of authority in church and state—came of the stock of the primal puritans of New England,—an ancestry rejoicing in a somewhat pronounced record of insubordination in both spheres of activity. After his graduation at the College of New Jersey[3] in 1754, he was educated for the medical profession,

[1] "The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 55.

[2] "The Journal of Sir Walter Scott," ii., 181.

[3] S. D. Alexander, "Princeton College During the Eighteenth Century," 31. This book, which was published in 1872, gives Odell's name in the list of the class of 1754, but has only this to say of him: "A grandson of President Dickinson; was from Connecticut Farms, New Jersey. After graduating, he entered the ministry, but I can discover no facts as to his place of settlement, or of his after life." This amazing statement was published fifteen years after the sketch of Odell by Wintrop Sargent in his "Loyalist Poetry," and eight years after the similar sketch by Sabine in his "Loyalists of the American Revolution"; and when, also, references to Odell had long been lying about in such familiar works as Force's "American Archives," in Sparks's edition of the "Writings of Washington," and in William B. Reed's "Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed." Can it be that Odell's career was thus blotted out, and refused remembrance, by his Alma Mater, as a tribute of satisfaction to good old President Witherspoon, whose mortal plumes were so mercilessly ruffled by this satirist in the later years of the Revolution?

becoming a surgeon in the British army, and serving with his regiment in the West Indies. From this employment he withdrew after a few years, and, proceeding to England, prepared himself for the sacred ministry. On the 4th of January, 1767, at the Chapel Royal, St. James's, he received priest's orders at the hands of the Bishop of Norwich; and fifteen days afterward he received from the Bishop of London his license as a minister of the Church in New Jersey. On his arrival in that province, he was inducted by Governor William Franklin into the rectorship of St. Mary's parish, Burlington; and thenceforward, until his labors were stopped by the war, he gave himself with the utmost devotion to his duties as parish priest, as missionary, and as physician.

II.

Thus, Jonathan Odell began his career as a clergyman in America in the very year in which the English ministry, by the renewal of its project for colonial taxation, called back into life that ill-boding controversy that had seemed to die a happy death on the repeal of the Stamp Act only a twelvemonth before. This action of the ministry was deeply lamented by Odell, who clearly saw the need of a fresh consideration of the whole subject of the rights of the colonies within the empire, together with a clearer definition and a more stable defense of those rights. All this, however, he was confident, could be obtained in due time, and in the usual English way of robust political agitation—without sedition, privy conspiracy, or rebellion. It was a part of his temperament, as it also was of his profession, to look with utter disapproval upon every project for violent resistance to constituted authority—still more so upon every project tending toward a dismemberment of the empire. Moreover, during the eight years of passionate debate, from the Townshend Act in June, 1767, until after the battle of Bunker Hill in June, 1775, he abstained from all public participation in political affairs, feeling it to be his duty as a

clergyman to promote "a spirit of peace and good order," and amid all those "perplexing and alarming troubles" to assist "by prudence and integrity of conduct" in the permanent establishment "of that harmony and peace, upon just and practicable grounds, which is essential to the happiness and glory of the whole empire."[1]

But after the battle of Bunker Hill, the dispute reached a stage at which such reserve was no longer possible on either side of the question. Nevertheless, even after that event, Odell still hoped to be permitted to pursue his calling in peace. "I told them," he said respecting the local committeemen who, in October, 1775, had arrested him for expressions used in two private letters which they had seized and broken open, "that I did not mean to dissemble my sentiments concerning the measures of Congress, but that I had made it a rule to myself from the beginning of our troubles, not to interfere directly or indirectly in public affairs; and though I neither could nor would make any sacrifice of my principles or duty, either as a loyal subject or a minister of the Church of England, yet my political conduct should be inoffensive, if they would allow a passive conduct to be so; and in short, that I presumed it reasonable in me to expect I should be indulged in the unmolested enjoyment of my private sentiments so long as I did not attempt to influence the sentiments or conduct of other men, and that private sentiments ought not to be made matter of public notice, much less of public censure."[2]

But with every month that passed, the flame of excitement kept rising; the year of the great decision soon came; and, of course, Odell's position was too conspicuous and his character too outspoken for him to remain unmolested in such an emergency. On the 4th of June, 1776, the birthday of King George, a number of British officers, who had been captured by General Montgomery in Canada sev-

[1] Odell's letter to the secretary of the S. P. G., July 7, 1775, given in Hills, "Hist. of the Ch. in Burlington," 307–308.

[2] Letter of Odell, Ibid. 314.

eral months before and were then held as prisoners at Burlington, celebrated the day by a dinner under the trees on a little island in the Delaware. It was but a few miles above the spot where the Continental Congress was in session. It was but three days before the resolution for Independence was presented to Congress by Richard Henry Lee. It was but one month before Independence itself was declared. Although at that very moment the air was all ablaze with the fiery demand for a total and final rejection of the authority of the king, Jonathan Odell wrote on behalf of these captive friends of his, a glowing ode for the royal birthday,[1] in which he sets forth, first, the enthusiasm with which throughout all other portions of the British empire the day was then being celebrated; next, the deplorable lack of enthusiasm for the king's birthday characterizing, at that time, a considerable party among his American subjects; and finally, their own undying devotion to the glorious monarch whose throne, it is here recorded, was to stand as long as the sun and the moon shall endure.

No doubt the gallant young fellows—young John André being one of them—who to the clashing accompaniment of their regimental music roared forth that proud and defiant song, felt an honest pity for the small provincial politicians who, just below them in Philadelphia, were even then chattering about Independence, and were dreaming their absurd dream of resistance to the invincible might of Britain. Meantime, the noise of their loyal merry-making, and particularly of Odell's song, made itself heard beyond the rim of the little island where they had held their celebration; and on the 20th of the following month, the provincial convention of New Jersey ordered that Jonathan Odell, as "a person suspected of being inimical to American liberty," be required to give his parole, pledging himself to remain "on the east side of Delaware river, within a circle of eight miles from the court-house of the city of Burling-

[1] "The Loyal Verses," etc., 7–9.

ton."[1] The course of Odell's life during the remainder of that year of mighty commotion, and until his final flight within the British lines, is best described in his own words, written in New York early in January, 1777: "After giving this parole, I remained unmolested at home till about the middle of last month, when a body of Hessians under the command of Count Donop came to Burlington intending to take post with us for the winter. Some of my neighbors thought it advisable to meet the commandant on his approach to the town, and to request him to spare the inhabitants from insult and their property from pillage. They requested me to go with them and assist in this charitable address, as an interpreter. I did so, and had the pleasure to find that I had a pretty good prospect of being of real service to my peaceable neighbors. But five gondolas, lying in the river, began to cannonade the town in order to prevent the troops taking quarter with us. Many houses were damaged but nobody hurt. The Hessian commandant, however, having with him no heavy cannon, thought proper to retire that night to Bordentown, intending to return with artillery sufficient to make good his quarters. In the meantime . . . as soon as it was known on board the gondolas that the troops had left us, the town was cruelly insulted and from day to day kept in alarm by those river tyrants. Mr. Lawrence, young Mr. Hawlings, and myself were in particular pursued by two captains and a number of armed men. We made our escapes, and were under the necessity of taking refuge among the king's troops. . . . I have been obliged to leave my wife and three children (the youngest not five weeks old) and to ramble as a refugee—God knows when to return."[2] During those days and nights of peril, in which the rector of Burlington was hunted like a felon from one hiding-place to another, he received most important aid from a shrewd and merry Quakeress, Margaret Morris, who then owned the

[1] "American Archives," 4 Ser., vol. vi. 1651.

[2] The whole letter is given in Hills, "Hist. of the Ch. in Burlington," 315.

great house upon the river bank, near Burlington, which had formerly belonged to Governor Franklin. Within this house was a secret chamber, of the greatest convenience in those troubled days, and named by its facetious proprietor the "augur hole." It was "a dark but quite roomy apartment, which had no window or aperture for light"; was just under the roof of one wing of the house, and could be reached only by entering a linen closet in the adjoining room, "drawing out the shelves," "prying up the movable back,"[1] and then stooping low and creeping in through the opening which would thus be revealed. It was to the shelter of this Quaker mansion, and especially of that very secluded portion of it, that Odell had fled; and a part of what happened to him then and shortly afterward, is thus told by the lively Quakeress, in her diary for December, 1776: "From the 13th to the 16th, . . . parties of armed men rudely entered the town, and diligent search was made for Tories. . . . A loud knocking at my door brought me to it. I was a little fluttered, and kept locking and unlocking that I might get my ruffled face a little composed; at last I opened it, and half a dozen men, all armed, demanded the key of the empty house.[2] I asked what they wanted there; they said, to search for a Tory. The name of a Tory, so near my own door, seriously alarmed me; for a poor refugee . . . was at that very time concealed, like a thief, in an augur hole. I rung the bell violently,—the signal agreed on if they came to search; and when I thought he had crept into the hole, I put on a very simple look, and cried out, 'Bless me, I hope you are not Hessians . . . but I 'll go with you into Colonel Cox's house' . . . So I marched at the head of them, opened the door, and searched every place, but we could not find the Tory. Strange where he could be! We returned—they greatly disappointed—I, pleased to think my house was not

[1] "Hist. of the Ch. in Burlington," 321 n.

[2] A neighboring house, belonging to a Colonel Cox. The key had been left with her.

suspected. . . . They left us, and searched J. V.'s and the two next houses, but no Tory could they find. . . . In the evening, I went to town with my refugee, and placed him in other lodgings. . . . Dec. 18th. . . . Our refugee gone off to-day out of the reach of gondolas and Tory-hunters." On the 12th of January, 1777, after this capable lady had heard of Odell's safe arrival in New York, she thus records her ideas as to his possible destiny: "We have some hopes that our refugee will be presented with a pair of lawn sleeves, when dignities become cheap; and suppose he will then think himself too big to creep into his old augur hole; but I shall remind him of the place, if I live to see him created first bishop of Burlington." [1]

III.

Upon his arrival in New York, Odell was received into high favor, which was increased rather than diminished under the test of time and trial. Being himself an old army man, he found among the officers about headquarters some ancient comrades and acquaintances; and into the habits and moods of military life he could, of course, enter with quick sympathy and adaptation. On the other hand, he was an American, of solid character and unusual intelligence: he knew the country, its people, its chief men, the currents and eddies of its agitated life. Moreover, he was a clergyman, a physician, a gentleman, cultivated by travel, by society, and by books. He was a fluent and keen prose writer, a poet, and a wit. With all these resources for effective service in many directions, and with every reason for self-restraint at last removed, he threw himself into the contest with the whole strength of his strong nature; he stood ready to lend a hand for any good measure that was in progress. He was "active in every way." [2] He served as chaplain of a corps of Loyalist American troops. [3]

[1] Hills, "Hist. of Ch. in Burlington," 321 n.

[2] W. B. Reed, "Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed," ii. 170 n.

[3] Sabine, "Loyalists of the Am. Rev.," ii. 122.

From the first, he seems to have been confided in by men high in authority in the army, and to have been the recipient of some delicate trusts; and at least one sinister reminiscence attaches to him, namely, as an organ of communication between Major André and the traitor Arnold. A most criminal letter of Arnold's is still in existence, addressed to André under the name of "Mr. John Anderson," and "to be left at the Rev. Mr. Odell's, New York."[1] But by far the most memorable work wrought by Jonathan Odell during the Revolution, was what he did in his capacity as satirist.

A man of so much earnestness and forbearance as he, and so competent, likewise, to deal seriously with the issues around which the controversy was waged, would not be likely to resort to satire as a principal weapon of conflict, until all other methods of intellectual warfare had been tried. At least this conception of the place and function of satire appears to have been held by him; for in the preface to the most elaborate of his satirical poems, he says: "The masters of reason have decided, that when doctrines and practices have been fairly examined, and proved to be contrary to truth, and injurious to society, then and not before may ridicule be lawfully employed in the service of virtue. This is exactly the case of the grand American rebellion: it has been weighed in the balance, and found wanting; able writers have exposed its principles, its conduct, and its final aim. Reason has done her part, and therefore this is the legitimate moment for satire."[2]

This may, in a measure, explain the fact that although Odell was within the British lines from about the beginning of the year 1777, and was an alert and impassioned observer of the struggle, he seems not to have entered the field as a satirist until so late as the year 1778. Moreover, all his work in that field, so far as can now be ascertained, is embraced in these four poems: "The Word of Congress,"[3]

[1] "Writings of Washington," Sparks's ed., vii. 521.

[2] "The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 151–152. [3] Ibid. 38–55.

published September 18, 1779; "The Congratulation,"[1] published November 6, 1779; "The Feu de Joie,"[2] published November 24, 1779; and "The American Times,"[3] written in 1779, and first published, perhaps, early in 1780.

IV.

All of these poems are framed after the models of English classical satire as presented by Dryden, Pope, and Churchill. Each has some slight plot by which the several topics are bound together; and each, plunging abruptly into its theme, dashes forward with fearless step, and a bitter, mocking, trenchant energy. Prefixed to the last of these poems is a motto from Juvenal,[4]—

"Facit indignatio versum"—

a motto that might with equal propriety be placed before them all. Throbbing along these verses is an indignation hot enough for the needs of any satirist; while the verses themselves, though tremulous and heaving with wrath, yet seem to leap toward their victims with a fury that is self-controlled, and to wield a blade polished and edged for the most scientific emotional surgery. Certainly, no student of the American Revolution who would now qualify himself to enter into the very thought and passion of those Americans who honestly opposed that great procedure, can refuse to himself a careful reading of these four satires of Jonathan Odell.

From these poems, to begin with, may one gather the

[1] "The Loyal Verses," etc., 45–50. From internal evidence this poem appears to have been written late in the year 1778; and though published in Rivington's "Gazette" at the date above named, it had probably been in print in some form before that time.

[2] Ibid. 51–58.

[3] "The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 1–37.

[4] Sat. I. 79. His motto would have been more effective, had he quoted the whole line: "Si natura negat, facit indignatio versum."

principal ideas which formed the basis of the political system of the American Loyalists: first, that the colonial policy of the English ministry, in the matter of taxation, was a blunder; secondly, that in view of the political sympathies and tendencies of the English people, and especially of the great liberal leaders in parliament, the colonies could without doubt defeat this policy simply by persevering in their opposition within constitutional limits; and, thirdly, that the act of the radical chiefs in America in pushing their opposition beyond those limits, into open rebellion, into treason, into the attempt at national dismemberment, was not at all necessary to the political safety of America, and was therefore both a blunder and a crime,—the awful consequences of which must surely come in ruin and in suffering, not only to themselves who were guilty, but to millions of men and women who were not guilty. Thus, in his latest satire, reviewing the whole contest, Odell passes this deliberate judgment upon the causes of it:

"Stand forth, Taxation! kindler of the flame—
Inexplicable question, doubtful claim:
Suppose the right in Britain to be clear,
Britain was mad to exercise it here.
Call it unjust, or, if you please, unwise,
The colonists were mad in arms to rise.

"Impolitic, and open to abuse,[1]
How could it answer? what could it produce?
No need for furious demagogues to chafe,
America was jealous, and was safe;
Secure she stood in national alarms,
And Madness only would have flown to arms.
Arms could not help the tribute, nor confound:
Self-slain it must have tumbled to the ground."[2]

Here, then, is a vast enterprise of folly and crime into which a multitude of worthy people have been seduced, to

[1] This obviously refers to "Taxation."
[2] "The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 30.

their ineffable injury and sorrow, by the arts of a few ambitious chiefs. Without at all denying that there is such a thing as justifiable rebellion, here, certainly, as the satirist holds, is rebellion which is not justifiable. That a people so sound and orderly as the American people, should have been drawn, in such vast numbers, into a rebellion of this character, can be explained, he thinks, only upon the theory of a widespread delusion or phrensy produced by some powerful potion—some maddening cup of sorcery—some horrid

". . . draught designed
To cheat the crowd, and fascinate mankind."

And the satirist is so fortunate as to have surprised the makers of this fatal draught while in the very act of compounding it:

"What group of wizards next salutes my eyes—
United comrades, quadruple allies?
Bostonian Cooper, with his Hancock joined,
Adams with Adams, one in heart and mind.
Sprung from the soil where witches swarmed of yore,
They come well skilled in necromantic lore;
Intent on mischief, busily they toil,
The magic caldron to prepare and boil;
Arrayed in sable vests, and caps of fur,
With wands of ebony the mess they stir;
See! the smoke rises from the cursed drench,
And poisons all the air with horrid stench.

"Celestial muse, I fear 't will make thee hot
To count the vile ingredients of the pot:
Dire incantations, words of death, they mix
With noxious plants, and water from the Styx;
Treason's rank flowers, Ambition's swelling fruits,
Hypocrisy in seeds, and Fraud in roots,
Bundles of Lies fresh gathered in their prime,

And stalks of Calumny grown stale with time;
Handfuls of Zeal's intoxicating leaves,
Riot in bunches, Cruelty in sheaves,
Slices of Cunning cut exceeding thin,
Kernels of Malice, rotten cores of Sin,
Branches of Persecution, boughs of Thrall,
And sprigs of Superstition, dipt in gall,
Opium to lull or madden all the throng,
And assafœtida profusely strong,
Milk from Tisiphone's infernal breast,
Herbs of all venom, drugs of every pest,
With min'rals from the centre brought by Gnomes,—
All seethe together till the furnace foams.

"Was this the potion, this the draught designed
To cheat the crowd, and fascinate mankind?
O void of reason they, who thus were caught;
O lost to virtue, who so cheap were bought;
O folly, which all folly sure transcends,
Such bungling sorc'rers to account as friends.

"Yet though the frantic populace applaud,
'T is Satire's part to stigmatize the fraud.
Exult, ye jugglers, in your lucky tricks,
Yet on your fame the lasting brand we 'll fix.
Cheat male and female, poison age and youth,
Still we 'll pursue you with the goad of truth.
Whilst in mid-heaven shines forth the golden flame,
Hancock and Adams shall be words of shame;
Whilst silver beams the face of night adorn,
Cooper of Boston shall be held in scorn." [1]

V.

The great American rebellion, then, is the result of a sort of insane phrensy produced by the wicked few in administering to their victims this potion of political necromancy—this hideous hell-broth made up of lies, sophistries,

[1] "The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 7–9.

ambitions, hatreds, hallucinations. Moreover, that the general madness has already made such frightful headway and havoc among the American people, has been due not to any lack of honest attempts on the part of honest men to stop it; for,

> "When civil madness first from man to man
> In these devoted climes like wildfire ran,
> There were who gave the moderating hint,
> In conversation some, and some in print;
> Wisely they spake—and what was their reward?—
> The tar, the rail, the prison, and the cord!
> Ev'n now there are, who bright in Reason's dress
> Watch the polluted Continental press;
> Confront the lies that Congress sends abroad,
> Expose the sophistry, detect the fraud."[1]

Changing, then, the image, it may be said that in this hand-to-hand battle with Error, the champions of Truth have been somewhat in the position of those brave knights of old who wandered through the world in order to fight and slay giants, enchanters, and fiery dragons,—yet with this difference, that when they had once slain the monster, slain he was, and that was the end of him:

> "But Error may not with such ease be quelled—
> She rallies fresh her force, though oft repelled;
> Cut, hacked, and mangled, she denies to yield,
> And straight returns with vigor to the field.
> Champions of Truth, our efforts are in vain;
> Fast as we slay, the foe revives again.
> Vainly the enchanted castle we surprise,
> New monsters hiss, and new enchantments rise."[2]

Moreover, the peculiar allies and agents of Error—the plotters and perpetrators of this stupendous rebellion—seem to

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[1] "The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 26–27.

[2] Ibid. 27–28.

be a race of men whose talent for mischief is inexhaustible, and who are able to provide a substitute and successor for any chieftain, however gifted, however unscrupulous, who may chance to fall:

"Was Samuel Adams to become a ghost,
Another Adams would assume his post;
Was bustling Hancock numbered with the dead,
Another full as wise might raise his head.
What if the sands of Laurens now were run,
How should we miss him—has he not a son?
Or what if Washington should close his scene,
Could none succeed him?—Is there not a Greene?
Knave after knave as easy we could join,
As new emissions of the paper coin.
When it became the high United States
To send their envoys to Versailles' proud gates,
Were not three ministers produced at once?—
Delicious group, fanatic, deist, dunce!
And what if Lee, and what if Silas fell,
Or what if Franklin should go down to hell,
Why should we grieve?—the land, 't is understood,
Can furnish hundreds equally as good." [1]

Then, again, so soon as American society had thrown off its ancient and rightful allegiance, it began to suffer the most horrid form of misgovernment—the rule of the worst:

"From the back woods half savages came down,
And awkward troops paraded every town.
Committees and conventions met by scores;
Justice was banished, Law turned out of doors;
Disorder seemed to overset the land;
They who appeared to rule, the tumult fanned;
But Cunning stood behind with sure control,
And in one centre caused to meet the whole." [2]

[1] "The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 28. [2] Ibid. 53.

Of course, by that "one centre" where Cunning stood behind the scene, and gave direction and method to the universal madness, the poet means the Continental Congress. Congress it is which, in the name of liberty, has brought in this many-headed tyranny—the instant product of which is a vast social jumble of ignorance, violence, folly, and wretchedness:

> "Here Anarchy before the gaping crowd
> Proclaims the people's majesty aloud;
> There Folly runs with eagerness about,
> And prompts the cheated populace to shout;
> Here paper-dollars meagre Famine holds,
> There votes of Congress Tyranny unfolds;
> With doctrines strange in matter and in dress,
> Here sounds the pulpit, and there groans the press;
> Confusion blows her trump—and far and wide
> The noise is heard—the plough is laid aside;
> The awl, the needle, and the shuttle drops;
> Tools change to swords, and camps succeed to shops;
> The doctor's glister-pipe, the lawyer's quill,
> Transformed to guns, retain their power to kill;
> From garrets, cellars, rushing through the street,
> The new-born statesmen in committees meet;
> Legions of senators infest the land,
> And mushroom generals thick as mushrooms stand."[1]

So often as the satirist looks abroad over the land, searching to find out who, beyond all question, are responsible for these appalling miseries, he comes back again and again and fastens his gaze upon Congress. That body it is which, in his opinion, is the one effective organ and operator of all this public profligacy and ruin. Therefore, with eyes flashing anger, with step and gesture expressive of uttermost contempt and loathing for these men who, in the name of patriotism and freedom, have committed treason, have organized despotism, have slain the happiness of the people,

[1] "The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 2.

he demands whether it is not at last quite time to tear the masks from their faces and to expose them for the robbers and the tyrants that they are:

"We will, we must—though mighty Laurens frown,
Or Hancock with his rabble hunt us down;
Champions of virtue, we 'll alike disdain
The guards of Washington, the lies of Paine,
And greatly bear, without one anxious throb,
The wrath of Congress, or its lords the mob." [1]

VI.

Upon Congress, accordingly, he wreaks his satiric vengeance, unwinding over its devoted head the voluminous folds of his own copious and fructifying vocabulary of curses. In his opinion, nothing can be plainer than that the history of the Continental Congress is but a history of political duplicity and deceit; and for all its brilliant versatility in deception, that renowned body deserves to be named the very Proteus of modern politics:

"Oh! 't is a word of power, of prime account:
I 've seen it like the daring Osprey mount;
I 've seen it like a dirty reptile creep,
Rush into flame, or plunge into the deep;
I 've heard it like a hungry lion roar,
Who tears the prey, and bathes himself in gore;
I 've seen it softer than the vernal rain,
Mildly descending on the grassy plain;
I 've heard it pious, as a saint in prayer—
I 've heard it like an angry trooper swear;
I 've known it suit itself to every plan—
I 've known it lie to God, and lie to man.

. . . . . .

Whoe'er the word of Congress shall peruse,
In every piece will see it change its views;

[1] "The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 1–2.

Now swell with duty to the king elate,
Now melt with kindness to the parent state,
Then back to treason suddenly revolve,
And join in Suffolk's infamous resolve.
Trace it through all the windings of the press,
Vote or appeal, petition or address,
Trace it in every act, in every speech,
Too sure you 'll find duplicity in each.
Mark now its soothing, now its threat'ning strain ;
Mark its hypocrisy, deceit, chicane ;
From the soft breathings of the new-formed board,
To that fell hour when Independence roared,
Forced, you 'll acknowledge, since creation's dawn
Earth never yet produced so vile a spawn." [1]

But the satirist is by no means satisfied when he has poured his execration upon Congress as a collective body of criminals: he needs to single out by name, and to blast individually, the men who compose it, and the men, also, who outside its walls are its conspicuous servants,—

" The blust'rer, the poltroon, the vile, the weak,
Who fight for Congress, or in Congress speak." [2]

One of those clearly entitled to this distinction at Odell's hands is Thomas Paine, whose service of Congress as a writer was most memorable:

" Swarms of deceivers, practised in the trade,
Were sent abroad to gull, cajole, persuade ;
. . . . . .
Others apart in some obscure recess,
The studied lie for publication dress :
Prepare the vague report, fallacious tale,
Invent fresh calumnies, revive the stale,
Pervert all records sacred and profane,—

[1] " The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 39 ; 49–50.

[2] Ibid. 44.

And chief among them stands the villain Paine.
This scribbling imp, 't is said, from London came,
That seat of glory intermixed with shame.

. . . . . .

Our hireling author having changed his soil,
True son of Grub Street, here renewed his toil.
What cannot ceaseless impudence produce?
Old Franklin [1] knows its value, and its use:
He caught at Paine, relieved his wretched plight,
And gave him notes, and set him down to write.
Fire from the Doctor's hints the miscreant took,
Discarded truth, and soon produced a book,—
A pamphlet which, without the least pretence
To reason, bore the name of 'Common Sense.'

. . . . . .

The work, like wildfire, through the country ran,
And Folly bowed the knee to Franklin's plan.
Sense, reason, judgment were abashed and fled,
And Congress reigned triumphant in their stead." [2]

Another personage upon whom this stern limner bestows his skill, is General John Sullivan, first a member of Congress, and afterward its military servant,—his most noted exploit being as leader of the famous expedition into the Indian country beyond the Susquehanna:

"Amidst ten thousand eminently base,
Thou, Sullivan, assume the highest place!
Sailor, and farmer, barrister of vogue,
Each state was thine, and thou in each a rogue.
Ambition came, and swallowed in a trice,
Like Aaron's rod, the reptile fry of vice.
One giant passion then his soul possessed,
And dreams of lawless sway disturbed his rest.
He gave each wild imagination scope,

[1] In the text, this name is not given.
[2] "The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 51–52.

And flew to Congress on the wings of hope.
Behold him there, but still behold him curst—
He sate in Congress, but he sate not first.
What could the fever of his mind compose?
Make him a general: general straight he grows.
Head of a shirtless, shoeless gang he strides—
While Wisdom stares and Folly shakes her sides.

"And must I sing the wonders of his might?
What are they? Rout, captivity, and flight!
Rhode Island saw him to her forts advance,
Assisted by the ships of faithless France:
Rhode Island saw him shamefully retreat,
In imitation of the Gallic fleet.
His banners last on Susquehanna waved,
Where, lucky to excess, his scalp he saved."[1]

Thus, the portraits of distinguished writers and generals are dashed off by Odell in bold, ferocious, and sometimes witty caricature, and are hung up by him against the panels of his rogues' gallery. Besides, not even the pettiness, not even the obscurity, of any miscreant can protect him from the attentions of this artist:

"Not always generals offer to our aim,—
By turns we must advert t' inferior game.
Yet hard to rescue from oblivion's grasp
The worthless beetle and the noxious asp;
And full as hard to save from after-times
The names of men known only for their crimes.
Left to themselves they soon would be forgot;
But yet 't is right that rogues should hang and rot."[2]

While, however, there is such catholicity in the range of his hatred, and a mob of minor malefactors do receive the painful honor of his notice, it is upon the supreme political criminals—the splendid and now immortal chiefs of the

[1] "The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 46–47. [2] Ibid. 13.

Revolution—that he bestows his most studied skill in execration. In "The American Times," the most polished and the most powerful of his satires, he contrives to bring these great criminals before him by means of a poetic device for which he is evidently indebted to the idea of Milton, namely, that the fallen angels, using their temporary privilege of absence from Pandemonium, are accustomed to take human forms and to enact renowned and malefic careers on the field of human history. In the development of this conception, Odell enacts a tremendous scene. Amid all this babel of clattering impudence in America,—standing indignant but unappalled in the very heart of this tumult wherein a mob of political jugglers are plotting crime and sorrow for their victims,—he summons into his presence from Pandemonium those mighty demons who, masquerading in this part of the earth under the shapes and names of mortal men, have really wrought here the chief infamy and wretchedness of the American rebellion:

> "O! for some magic voice, some powerful spell,
> To call the Furies from profoundest hell!
> Arise, ye Fiends, from dark Cocytus's brink;
> Soot all my paper, sulphurize my ink;
> So with my theme the colors shall agree,
> Brimstone and black—the livery of Lee."[1]

Instantly, in response to his potent call, they rise and swarm around him, a flock of malignant monsters from the nethermost pit, and receive from him their sentence: first, William Livingston of New Jersey, against whom Odell had very special grounds for abhorrence; then the serene and wise John Jay; then Samuel Chase, the robust lawyer and statesman of Maryland; then Robert Morris, the financier; then his coadjutor in finance, the brilliant and exuberant Gouverneur Morris:

[1] "The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 3. Of course, the "Lee" here named is General Charles Lee, who, as is now known, was a greater scoundrel than even Odell thought him.

"Whence and what art thou, execrable form,
Rough as a bear, and roaring as a storm?
Ay, now I know thee—Livingston art thou—
Gall in thy heart, and malice on thy brow;
Coward, yet cruel—zealous, yet profane;
Havoc, and spoil, and ruin are thy gain.
Go, glut like Death thy vast unhide-bound maw;
Remorseless swallow liberty and law;
At one enormous stroke a nation slay—
But thou thyself shall perish with thy prey.

"What Fiend is this, of countenance acute,
More of the knave who seems, and less of brute;
Whose words are cutting like a shower of hail,
And blasting as the mildew in the vale?
'T is Jay—to him these characters belong:
Sure sense of right, with fixed pursuit of wrong;
An outside keen, where malice makes abode;
Voice of a lark, and venom of a toad;
Semblance of worth, not substance, he puts on,
And Satan owns him for his darling son.

"Flit not around me thus, pernicious elf,
Whose love of country terminates in self;
Back to the gloomy shades, detested sprite,
Mangler of rhetoric, enemy of right:
Cursed of thy father, sum of all that 's base,
Thy sight is odious and thy name is Chase.

"What spectre 's that, with eyes on earth intent,
Whose god is gold, whose glory cent. per cent.;
Whose soul, devoted to the love of gain,
Revolts from feelings noble or humane?
Let friends, let family, let country groan,
Despairing widows shriek, and orphans moan;
Turned to the centre where his riches grow,
His eye regards not spectacles of woe.
Morris, look up—for so thy name we spell—
On earth, Bob Morris, Mammon 't is in hell.

Wretch, who hast meanly sold thy native land,
Tremble, thou wretch, for vengeance is at hand ;
Soon shall thy treasures fly on eagle's wings,
And conscience goad thee with her thousand stings.

" Of head erect, and self-sufficient mien,
Another Morris presses to be seen.
Demons of vanity, you know him sure ;
This is your pupil, this is Gouverneur.
Some little knowledge, and some little sense,
More affectation far, and more pretense ;
Such is the man—his tongue he never balks,
On all things talkable he boldly talks ;
A specious orator, of law he prates ;
A pompous nothing, mingles in debates ;
Consummate impudence, sheer brass of soul,
Crowns every sentence, and completes the whole ;
In other times, unnoticed he might drop—
Confusion makes a statesman of a fop." [1]

VII.

With characters so powerful or so interesting as these, the poet is not always occupied,—as when he condescends to bestow four lines of contempt on that blundering and bibulous American officer, the titular Lord Stirling:

" What matters what of Stirling may become ?
The quintessence of whiskey, soul of rum ;
Fractious at nine, quite gay at twelve o'clock ;
From thence till bed-time stupid as a block." [2]

For a fresh assortment of villains to choose from, the satirist has but to repeat his invocation, and up come another gang of them, among whom happens to be conspicuous the Polish revolutionist and outlaw, Pulaski, who was accused of plan-

[1] " The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 4–6.
[2] " The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 14.

ning the abduction of his king, and who was actually killed on an American battle-field a few months after that very fate was predicted for him in these lines:

"Turn out, black monsters—let us take our choice!
What devilish figure 's this, with devilish voice?
Oh! 't is Pulaski—'t is a foreign chief;
On him we 'll comment—be our comment brief.
What are his merits, judges may dispute;
We 'll solve the doubt, and praise him—for a brute.
'No quarter' is his motto—sweet and short:
Good Britons, give him a severe retort.
As yet he 'scapes the shot deserved so well—
His nobler horse in Carolina fell;
He fears not, in the field where heroes bleed,
He starts at nothing—but a generous deed.
Escaped from Poland, where his murd'rous knife,
'T is said, was raised against his sovereign's life,
Perhaps he scoffs, with fashionable mirth,
The notion of a God who rules the earth.
Fool! not to see that something more than lot
Conducts the traitor to this destined spot,—
Rank with congenial crimes that call for blood,
Where justice soon must pour the purple flood,
A parricide, with parricides to die,
And vindicate the Power that reigns on high."[1]

With even a keener zest for bestowing deserved punishment, the poet also recognizes among the rabble of fiends that he has called up from the pit, one whose earth-name is Witherspoon:

"Known in the pulpit by seditious toils,
Grown into consequence by civil broils,
Three times he tried, and miserably failed,
To overset the laws—the fourth prevailed.
Whether as tool he acted, or as guide,
Is yet a doubt—his conscience must decide.

[1] "The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 14–15.

Meanwhile unhappy Jersey mourns her thrall,
Ordained by vilest of the vile to fall;
To fall by Witherspoon!—O name, the curse
Of sound religion, and disgrace of verse.
Member of Congress, we must hail him next:
'Come out of Babylon,' was now his text.
Fierce as the fiercest, foremost of the first,
He 'd rail at kings, with venom well-nigh burst.
Not uniformly grand—for some bye-end,
To dirtiest acts of treason he 'd descend:
I 've known him seek the dungeon dark as night,
Imprisoned Tories to convert, or fright;
Whilst to myself I 've hummed, in dismal tune,
I 'd rather be a dog than Witherspoon.
Be patient, reader—for the issue trust;
His day will come—remember, Heaven is just!"[1]

Thus, one by one, these monsters of political crime, as they flutter about the poet, are described and damned,—members of Congress, generals of the army, governors of States, subordinate officers of government, and even its hired scribblers:

"Wretches, whose acts the very French abhor;
Commissioners of loans, and boards of war,
Marine committees, commissaries, scribes,
Assemblies, councils, senatorial tribes.

. . . . . .

Ask you the names of these egregious wights?
I could as soon recount Glendower's sprites.
Thick as mosquitoes, venomously keen,
Thicker than locusts, spoilers of the green;
Swarming like maggots who the carcass scour
Of some poor ox, and as they crawl, devour,—
They 'd mock the labors of a hundred pens—
'Back, owly-headed monsters, to your dens.'"[2]

[1] "The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 17–18. [2] Ibid. 20.

Scarcely any man of prominence in the Revolutionary cause has the felicity to be overlooked by this terrible judge; and no one, once looked upon by him, escapes without a sentence which seems to make soul and body writhe in torment. To one character only—and he a civilian, even a member of Congress, even the president of Congress—is the satirist willing to concede one solitary trait of goodness. That character is Henry Laurens, the noble South Carolinian. Having ordered back to the pit from which they came, all these clamorous monsters, the poet turns with a sort of sad respect to Laurens:

"At length, they 're silenced! Laurens, thou draw near;
What I shall utter, thou attentive hear!
I loathe all conference with thy boisterous clan,
But now with thee I 'll argue as a man.

"What could incite thee, Laurens, to rebel?—
Thy soul thou wouldst not for a trifle sell.
'T was not of power the wild, insatiate lust;
Mistaken as thou art, I deem thee just.
Saw'st thou thy king tyrannically rule?
Thou could'st not think it—thou art not a fool.
Thou wast no bankrupt, no enthusiast thou;
The clearness of thy fame e'en foes allow.
For months I watched thee with a jealous eye,
Yet could no turpitude of mind espy.
In private life I hold thee far from base—
Thy public conduct wears another face.
In thee a stern republican I view;
This of thy actions is the only clew.
Admit thy principles—could these demand,
Could these give right, to desolate a land?
Could it be right, with arbitrary will,
To fine, imprison, plunder, torture, kill?
Impose new oaths, make stubborn conscience yield,
And force out thousands to the bloody field?
Could it be right to do these monstrous things—
Because thy nature was averse to kings?

Well, but a stern republican thou art ;
Heaven send thee soon to meet with thy desert !
Thee, Laurens, foe to monarchy we call,
And thou, or legal government, must fall.
Who wept for Cato, was not Cato's friend ;
Who pitied Brutus, Brutus would offend.
So, Laurens, to conclude my grave harangue,
I would not pity, though I saw thee hang." [1]

But in all this bustling throng of political criminals upon whom the poet has bestowed his imprecation, right hearty and blistering, where is Washington ? And did the American Loyalists of 1779—did even Jonathan Odell, the most implacable of them all—dare to assault him, to dispute his integrity, to deny to him that purity of character, those stately virtues, for which he is now canonized by the human race ? Let us for a moment hearken !

" Strike up, hell's music ! roar, infernal drums !
Discharge the cannon ! Lo, the warrior comes !
He comes, not tame as on Ohio's banks
But rampant at the head of ragged ranks.
Hunger and itch are with him—Gates and Wayne !
And all the lice of Egypt in his train.
Sure these are Falstaff's soldiers, poor and bare,
Or else the rotten reg'ments of Rag-Fair.

. . . . . .

Wilt thou, great chief of Freedom's lawless sons,
Great captain of the western Goths and Huns,
Wilt thou for once permit a private man
To parley with thee, and thy conduct scan ?
At Reason's bar has Catiline been heard :
At Reason's bar e'en Cromwell has appeared.

. . . . . .

" Hear thy indictment, Washington, at large ;
Attend and listen to the solemn charge :

[1] " The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 21–22.

Thou hast supported an atrocious cause
Against thy king, thy country, and the laws;
Committed perjury, encouraged lies,
Forced conscience, broken the most sacred ties;
Myriads of wives and fathers at thy hand
Their slaughtered husbands, slaughtered sons, demand;
That pastures hear no more the lowing kine,
That towns are desolate, all—all is thine;
The frequent sacrilege that pained my sight,
The blasphemies my pen abhors to write,
Innumerable crimes on thee must fall—
For thou maintainest, thou defendest all.

. . . . . .

What could, when half-way up the hill to fame,
Induce thee to go back, and link with shame?
Was it ambition, vanity, or spite
That prompted thee with Congress to unite;
Or did all three within thy bosom roll,
'Thou heart of hero with a traitor's soul'?
Go, wretched author of thy country's grief,
Patron of villainy, of villains chief;
Seek with thy cursed crew the central gloom,
Ere Truth's avenging sword begin thy doom;
Or sudden vengeance of celestial dart
Precipitate thee with augmented smart." [1]

VIII.

Through all the songs and satires of Jonathan Odell there runs one thread of passionate sentiment which has to be recognized as something profoundly characteristic of him and of the great Loyalist party of which he was a leader, namely, an absolute, a cloudless, confidence in the ultimate and perfect triumph of their party through the ultimate and perfect triumph of the British arms in America. How could it be otherwise? Who that had mastered the first four rules of arithmetic, could doubt that Great Britain

[1] "The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 9–12.

would put down and stamp out this American rebellion? Accordingly, from that June afternoon in 1776, when the captive British officers, on an island in the Delaware, sang the rousing ode in which Odell had put into lyric form his assurance of the speedy discomfiture of the rebels, down to the year 1783, when the impossible came to pass, in the acknowledgment by England of the complete success of the American rebellion, it is apparent that Jonathan Odell held firmly to his faith that the arms of England must, as a matter of course, shatter and annihilate all organized opposition in the colonies.

"Though faction by falsehood awhile may prevail,
And Loyalty suffers, a captive in jail,
Britain is roused, rebellion is falling:
God save the king!
The captive shall soon be released from his chain,
And conquest restore us to Britain again,
Ever to join in chanting merrily
Glory and joy crown the king!"[1]

Such was a part of Odell's song for the king's birthday in the year 1777. Nevertheless, that year and the year following passed away, and the power of armed rebellion in America did not pass away. In spite of this strange delay, Odell doubted not that the rebellion was doomed, and that its doom was very near. Nay, in the autumn of 1778, after the grotesque failure of the French squadron in their first campaign of alliance with the Americans, Odell flung into a tumult of jeering verse his exultation over the proofs then so plentiful, that the rebel cause had not another leg to stand on:

"The farce of empire will be finished soon,
And each mock monarch dwindle to a loon;
Mock-money and mock-States shall melt away,
And the mock-troops disband for want of pay.
. . . . . .

[1] "The Loyal Verses," etc., 12.

Now War, suspended by the scorching heat,
Springs from his tent, and shines in arms complete ;
Now Sickness, that of late made heroes pale,
Flies from the keenness of the northern gale ;
Firmness and Enterprise, united, wait
The last command to strike the stroke of Fate ;
Now Boston trembles, Philadelphia quakes,
And Carolina to the centre shakes !

. . . . . .

What now is left of Continental brags ?—
Taxes unpaid, though payable in rags.
What now remains of Continental force ?—
Battalions mould'ring, waste without resource.
What rests there yet of Continental sway ?—
A ruined people—ripe to disobey.
Hate now of men, and soon to be the jest !
Such is your fate, ye Monsters of the West ! "[1]

Indeed, so plain was it to Odell that the last flicker of light was now to be seen in the dying embers of the rebellion, that he was able, near the close of the year 1778, to fix the exact date for its final extinction, namely, the year 1779. Therefore, for a company of Loyalists who, with convivial rites, were watching the old year out and the new year in, he conveyed this prediction in the form of a capital song, entitled " The Old Year and the New: a Prophecy " :

" What though last year be past and gone,
Why should we grieve or mourn about it ?
As good a year is now begun,
And better, too,—let no one doubt it.
'T is New Year's morn ; why should we part ?
Why not enjoy what heaven has sent us ?
Let wine expand the social heart,
Let friends, and mirth, and wine content us.

" War's rude alarms disturbed last year ;
Our country bled and wept around us ;

[1] " The Loyal Verses," etc., 48–50.

But this each honest heart shall cheer,
And peace and plenty shall surround us.

"Last year 'King Congo,' through the land,
Displayed his thirteen stripes to fright us;
But George's power, in Clinton's hand,
In this New Year shall surely right us.

"Last year saw many honest men
Torn from each dear and sweet connection;
But this shall see them home again,
And happy in their king's protection.

"Last year vain Frenchmen braved our coasts,
And baffled Howe, and 'scaped from Byron;
But this shall bring their vanquished hosts
To crouch beneath the British lion.

"Last year rebellion proudly stood,
Elate, in her meridian glory;
But this shall quench her pride in blood,—
George will avenge each martyred Tory.

"Then bring us wine, full bumpers bring:
Hail this New Year in joyful chorus;
God bless great George our gracious king,
And crush rebellion down before us.
'T is New Year's morn; why should we part?
Why not enjoy what heaven has sent us?
Let wine expand the social heart,
Let friends, and mirth, and wine content us." [1]

[1] "The Loyalist Poetry," etc., 99–101. Though I have nowhere seen this song mentioned as Odell's, I do not hesitate to ascribe it to him. It is exactly in his best manner. Moreover, from a contemporary reference, we know that the song was written by a clergyman; and it is impossible to name any other Loyalist clergyman then in the country, who is known to have produced verse of the quality of this. I am confident, also, that a considerable part of Odell's work as a song-writer and satirist during the Revolution has thus far escaped recognition as his.

As one comes to the end of the American Revolution—an end that brought with it to the American Loyalists a shock of sickening disappointment and of irreparable disaster—we find them presently breaking up into two sections: first, those who after a time relented, sought reconciliation with the victors, or were glad, at any rate, to come back and dwell in peace in the young republic whose existence had been won in spite of them; and, secondly, those who never relented, who never sought reconciliation, and who, in England, in Nova Scotia, in Upper Canada, or in some other portion of the British empire, found a shelter and finally a grave for a political hostility which no lapse of time could quench or even soften. To the first section, Joseph Stansbury belonged: to the second, belonged Jonathan Odell. His principle as an American Loyalist had in it an invincible tenacity, a deathless love, a deathless hate. Even after the surrender of Cornwallis in 1781, and so long as England kept a solitary soldier in America, Odell continued to talk of aggression—of renewing the struggle,—of getting vengeance and victory even yet. When, finally, the contemptuous wrath of England gave way, and she forced her reluctant king to make terms with the late American rebels, Odell would not make terms with them; he still denounced and defied them; and with other inappeasable opponents of American Independence, he abandoned the land of his birth and of his ancestry, and settled himself in Nova Scotia, where he sustained a distinguished civil career, and where at last, in extreme old age, he died, without ever taking back a word, or uttering an apology, or flinching from an opinion,—a proud, gritty member of a political party that had been defeated, but never conquered or convinced.

CHAPTER XXX.

FRANCIS HOPKINSON AS HUMOROUS CHAMPION OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE: 1776–1781.

I.—Hopkinson chosen to represent New Jersey in Congress, then discussing the resolution for Independence—His serious work in legislation, in executive business—Becomes Judge of the Court of Admiralty in Pennsylvania—Finds relief from official labors in his sprightly contributions to Revolutionary literature.

II.—Obstacles to American Independence presented by certain mental and sentimental habits of the Americans—The survival among them of the colonial attitude toward the mother country—For political free-mindedness, a critical disposition is needed—To this Hopkinson contributes in December, 1776, by his "Letter Written by a Foreigner on the Character of the English Nation"—Facetious description of the typical Englishman—Playful account of the origin of the English quarrel with America—The intellectual capacity of the British voters who sustain the ministry in their war against America.

III.—General account of Hopkinson's contributions to Revolutionary literature—His revision of them in his "Miscellaneous Essays and Occasional Writings"—After July 4, 1776, the chief objects of attack for a Whig satirist are the military invaders of the country, and their American allies—Hopkinson's tone toward both these enemies of Independence.

IV.—Hopkinson's "Letter to Lord Howe," December, 1776—His "Political Catechism," and his "Camp Ballad," early in 1777—His ridicule of the two great British invasions of 1777—The terror inspired by that under General Burgoyne—Hopkinson's burlesque of Burgoyne's grandiloquent proclamation—Britannia's humiliation through Burgoyne's failure, set forth in the ballad, "Date Obolum Belisario."

V.—Hopkinson's ridicule of Howe's invasion of Pennsylvania—Circumstances which suggested "The Battle of the Kegs"—The effectiveness of that ballad—Its inferior literary quality.

VI.—Hopkinson's ridicule of the Loyalists—Their social prepossessions—Their alleged snobbishness—His "Two Letters" as by Loyalists avowing their most offensive opinions and purposes—His last work as a Revolutionary humorist, an "Advertisement," November, 1781, in ridicule of the Tory printer and bookseller, James Rivington.

I.

THE prominent part taken by Francis Hopkinson, in April, 1776, in the literary debate over the question of Independence,[1] made it natural that the political party in New Jersey which favored that measure should a few weeks afterward choose him as their representative in Congress, then engaged, as it was, in the final consideration of the same tremendous topic.

Upon taking his seat there, he was at once made a member of the committee for framing the articles of confederation.[2] In the following September, he was designated by the governor of New Jersey as one of the justices of the superior court of that State—a position which he seems to have declined.[3] In November of the same year, his associates in Congress laid upon him the sole responsibility of executing "the business of the navy," under the direction of the marine committee.[4] At a later period, he served Congress as treasurer of the continental loan office.[5] Finally, in July, 1779, he received from the president of Pennyslvania the high place of judge of the court of admiralty in that State,[6]—a position which he filled for the subsequent ten years.

It does not appear that the assumption by Hopkinson of these high and grave tasks had any effect in diminishing his facility or sprightliness as a humorous political writer. On the contrary, he seems to have found relief from the fatigue and the solemn stiffness of public business, in such escapades of fancy and mirth—always made, of course, under an incognito. At any rate, the most frolicsome of his writings were precisely those which were thrown off, as mere sports of the mind, in the midst of the gravity and high dignity of his labors as a legislator and a judge. He was a

[1] This subject is dealt with in chapter xxii. of the present work.

[2] "Journals of Congress," i. 390–391.

[3] Hildeburn, in "Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.," ii. 321–322.

[4] "Journals of Congress," i. 551.

[5] Hildeburn, in "Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.," ii. 323. [6] Ibid. 322.

devotee to the law, who never took farewell of the muses. And thus it came about that, from the autumn of 1774 on until the very close of the long struggle, the cause of the Revolution, at nearly every stage and emergency of it, was rescued from depression, was quickened, was cheered forward, was given strength, by the vivacity of this delightful writer.

II.

Even after Congress had pronounced the terrific word Independence,—thus rending and trampling under foot the most solemn protestations made by the American people during the preceding ten years,—there still remained in their imaginations and in their hearts a prodigious obstacle to the full adoption and support of that audacious political heresy. There, to begin with, was the ancient and most passionate love of the American colonists for England itself, —for England, the cradle of their race, the one spot in all the world which, during nearly two hundred years of absence from it, they had continued to speak of as Home. There, also, was their deep, even if very provincial, regard for everything English, in opinion, in costume, in manner, in speech, in precedent. There, likewise, was American reverence for the king—a reverence perhaps always increasing in the ratio of distance from him; reverence for the king, and his chief ministers, his parliament, his generals, his troops. There, too, was American unconsciousness of their own real power in resistance and in attack—of their latent resources in civil and military organization and self-control. There, again, was the social prestige of the royal cause in America. There were the chances for promotion in rank and in office, by remaining on the king's side,—all the lures of hope, ambition, ease, wealth, respectability, held out by that side. And besides all these, there was the appeal to fear,—an appeal never very far from any man in those days,—the vision presented to the eye with awful distinctness as a thing not at all unlikely to become

real some day,—the vision of a long cloudy vista, stretching far down across red battle-fields, and over mangled corpses piled up in heaps, and finally, at the further end of it, a row of scaffolds, and on each scaffold a vanquished rebel pendent. In very truth, all these were considerations which, even with honest and high-spirited people, sadly weighed, in those days, against the resolution to go over to this plucky but sudden and dubious project for Independence. Who could grapple with all these intimidating forces? Certainly, no one did so more effectually than the men who wielded the printing-press,—particularly the wits and satirists and pamphleteers on the venturesome side!

The doctrine of Independence, then, was a proposition quickly to alienate a whole people from an object which for ages had seemed to them to be very great and venerable, toward which they were still drawn by a something that throbbed in every drop of their blood,—by the instincts of race, by ancient traditions, by hereditary habits, by sentiments of ineffable depth and tenderness, by a set of spiritual forces among the strongest that can kindle and sway the human heart. Furthermore, any attempt to disturb and to reverse these deep-seated tendencies on the part of a whole people, had to encounter at the beginning, a serious difficulty springing from the very nature of the colonial mind—the undeveloped state of its critical faculty as regards the personal traits, the provoking limitations, the less pleasing idiosyncracies, of the mother race from which the colonists have themselves sprung, and with which until then they had always been eager and proud to be identified. For, always, the colonial mind in its normal condition does not judge keenly, much less does it ridicule, the faults and foibles of the parent nation. The colony that has begun to ridicule its national parent is not far from Independence. Accordingly, for the development among the Americans in 1776 of the robust political courage invoked by their new doctrine of national separation, it was necessary that this amiable note of provincialism—this filial obtuseness of the colonial mind

—should be broken up, and that the Englishmen who lived in America should begin to find food for mirth and even for derision in the peculiarities of the Englishmen who lived in England.

Toward this important political result, Hopkinson made some contribution in his so-called "Letter written by a Foreigner on the Character of the English Nation."[1] Under an old device for securing disinterested judgments on national peculiarities, Hopkinson here represents a cultivated foreigner as spending some time in England in the latter part of 1776, and as giving to a friend in his own country a cool but very satirical analysis of the alleged vices, foibles, and absurdities of the English people, and of the weak and wrong things in their treatment of their late colonists in America. "The general character of the English," says this philosophical observer, "is certainly the most fantastic and absurd that ever fell to the lot of any known nation. As they are made up of contradictions, it would be unjust to give them any uniform designation. There is scarce a virtue that adorns the mind, or a vice that disgraces human nature, but may be ascribed to them as part of their national character. But the former are often rendered ineffectual by misapplication, and the latter qualified by a levity of manners, which shews them not to be constitutionally prevalent. An Englishman will treat his enemy with great generosity, and his friend with ingratitude and inhumanity. He will be lavish of his wealth when he has but little of it, and become a miserly wretch when fortune pours her favors into his purse. He will brave the utmost hardships, and encounter the severest trials with heroic fortitude; and will drown or hang himself because the wind is in the east. He will lend large sums to a stranger on the slightest security, and refuse his nearest relation the means of subsistence. To-day his heart expands

[1] This is the title given in the Contents to vol. i. of "The Miscellaneous Essays." Over the text of the letter itself is this title: "Translation of a Letter Written by a Foreigner on his Travels," i. 98.

with social benevolence; to-morrow he is cold, sullen, and morose. To-day he possesses the wealth of a nabob; to-morrow he refuses a sixpence to a beggar, lest he should himself be reduced to the want of that sixpence. In a word, contradiction and absurdity make an Englishman." [1]

In the course of this supposed letter from London, the disinterested foreign gentleman who is represented as writing it, very naturally refers to the quarrel then going on between the king and his American subjects; and he is thus led to give to his correspondent an explanation—a very luminous and amusing explanation it is—of the origin of the quarrel, only substituting for the constitutional formula, "No taxation without representation," the arithmetical formula, "Two and two make four,"—the one formula being, according to the satirist, quite as obvious as the other. "This best of all kings," he writes, "has now turned his attention to America. There he had three millions of subjects, who loved, honored, and obeyed him. He governed them by officers of his own appointment; he had the whole regulation of their commerce; and the overflowings of their wealth were conducted, by easy channels, into his coffers, and into the purses of the merchants and manufacturers of his kingdom. But he has quarreled with these loyal and beneficial subjects, because they are so obstinate that they will not acknowledge that two and two make five. Whole volumes have been written on this subject, and all the force of reason and eloquence exerted to convince this wise king that he is in an error. The Americans have most emphatically beseeched him to accept of the undissembled loyalty of their hearts; declaring that they are

[1] "The Miscellaneous Essays," etc., i. 98–99. If we would now do justice to the skill and the success with which England, by the deft hands of her king and parliament, then conducted that fine motherly process of race-weaning which history embodies under the name of the American Revolution, we should here note that the genial American writer who, in 1776, thus defined an Englishman as a person made up of "contradiction and absurdity," was the same one who, just ten years before, had been anxious to have it understood that "we of America are in all respects Englishmen."

satisfied that the fruits of their industry should center with him and his people as heretofore, to enrich and aggrandize them; but humbly pray that they may not be compelled to acknowledge that two and two make five, which would be to them a most dangerous and distressing violation of truth. But this wise and humane monarch is far from being disposed to give up the point. He has rejected their petitions with scorn, and spurned at their offers of affection and fidelity; and declares, that he will even risk the crown of his ancestors, but he will make the obstinate Americans subscribe to his new dogma.

"To this end he hath sent over not only his own fleets and armies, but has hired a banditti of foreign mercenaries from a petty prince who supports the splendor of his court by selling the blood of his subjects; and he has also employed negroes and wild Indians to persecute the poor Americans without mercy, until they shall acknowledge that two and two make five.

"America is at this time a scene of desolation and distress —a theatre whereon is acted a real tragedy, exhibiting every species of cruelty and injustice. The royal army of this most enlightened of all nations are ravishing the women, murdering the men, and laying waste that fertile and beautiful country, under the conduct of Lord and General Howe; who are executing their bloody mandate, with all the composure in the world. His most gracious majesty receives, from time to time, such accounts of their proceedings as they please to give him, and is as happy as such a monarch can be.

"Who would have thought that the peaceful plains of America would be desolated because the inhabitants will not believe that two and two make five, when their good king and his wise parliament require them to do so?

"On the contrary, the Americans, highly resenting this treatment, have declared that they will no longer be pensioners of the smiles of such a king, or submit to a government in which they have no share, and over which they

have no control, and which is, therefore, with respect to them, a government of mere will and pleasure. They have determined to be henceforth a free people; and have publicly avowed that they will enjoy the inestimable privileges of believing, and saying, that two and two make only four, according to the common sense of mankind."[1]

Such, according to this philosophic observer, late in the year 1776, is the origin of the American war. And how must such a war terminate? Is not the king's claim too preposterous to be long supported, even by his own subjects in England? At a distance, one might think so. "But the truth is that the king, by means of his ministers, hath gained such an ascendancy over the parliament, which is the constitutional voice of the people, that he can obtain their sanction for any project in which their rights are not openly and directly attacked. As to the people at large, they do not trouble themselves about the right or wrong of the matter in contest. America is a great way off, and they have no feelings for what is passing there. They grumble, indeed, about the diminution of their trade, in consequence of this war, but leave the discussion of national politics to their parliament."[2]

To make quite clear to his correspondent just how all this could be, the imaginary letter-writer then goes on to sketch with a free hand the limited lives and the petty mental range of the common people of England, their patriotic incredulity as to the existence of anything great or good outside of their little island, and especially the very limited knowledge and the quite unlimited self-conceit and stupidity of the ordinary English shopkeeper and mechanic: "The extreme ignorance of the common people of this civilized country can scarce be credited. In general, they know nothing beyond the particular branch of business which their parents or the parish happened to choose for them. This, indeed, they practise with unremitting diligence; but never think of extending their knowledge farther.

[1] "The Miscellaneous Essays," etc., i. 101–104. [2] Ibid. 104.

"A manufacturer[1] has been brought up a maker of pin-heads. He has been at this business forty years, and of course makes pin-heads with great dexterity; but he cannot make a whole pin for his life. He thinks it is the perfection of human nature to make pin-heads. He leaves other matters to inferior abilities. It is enough for him, that he believes in the Athanasian creed, reverences the splendor of the court, and makes pin-heads. This he conceives to be the sum-total of religion, politics, and trade. He is sure that London is the finest city in the world; Blackfriars bridge, the most superb of all possible bridges; and the river Thames, the largest river in the[2] universe. It is in vain to tell him that there are many rivers in America, in comparison of which the Thames is but a ditch; that there are single provinces there larger than all England; and that the colonies, formerly belonging to Great Britain, now Independent States, are vastly more extensive than England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, taken all together. He cannot conceive this. He goes into his best parlor, and looks on a map of England, four feet square; on the other side of the room, he sees a map of North and South America, not more than two feet square; and exclaims—'How can these things be!—it is altogether impossible!' He has read the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, and he hears this wonderful account of America; he believes the one as much as the other. That a giant should rise out of the sea, or that the Delaware should be larger than the Thames, are equally incredible to him. Talk to him of the British constitution, he will tell you—'it is a glorious constitution.' Ask him what it is, and he is ignorant of its first principles; but he is sure that he can make and sell pin-heads under it. Mention the freedom of elections, and he will tell you that 'he does not meddle in these matters; that he lives in a borough; and that it is impossible but that Squire Goose-Cap must represent that borough in parliament—because Squire

[1] Grandiose for artisan or mechanic.

[2] The text omits the definite article.

Goose-Cap is acquainted with the prime minister, and his lady comes every Sunday to the parish church in a brocaded gown; and sits in a pew lined with green cloth. How, then, can it be otherwise, but these are things in which he is not concerned?' He believes in the Athanasian creed, honours the king, and makes pin-heads—and what more can be expected of man."[1]

From these character-sketches by the supposed foreigner in London in the year 1776—themselves by no means despicable for neat workmanship and for humorous power—it is not difficult to make out just how Hopkinson's playful writings were adapted to the achievement of serious political results, as ridding colonial-minded Americans of the intellectual restraint imposed almost unconsciously by their old provincial awe of England, and helping them to subject the metropolitan race to caustic and even contemptuous handling, as a necessary condition of national free-mindedness and of bold dissent on questions of political authority and control.

III.

It was in this spirit and with such skill, that Francis Hopkinson, legislator and judge, wrought and fought for his country, year by year, in his special capacity as man of letters and particularly as satirist. There can be no doubt that very many of his writings, having been dashed off upon occasion and printed without his name, still remain unrecognized in the newspapers to which he originally sent them; for it is chiefly to his own act, in selecting those writings which make up the three volumes of his "Miscellaneous Essays and Occasional Writings," that we are indebted for our knowledge of his authorship of the larger portion of the productions which now go under his name. Moreover, in his later years and especially after the outbreak of the French Revolution, he became more than willing to forget the asperities of the old controversy with England—then

[1] "The Miscellaneous Essays," etc., i. 106–108.

taking her undaunted stand as champion of the social order of the world. When, therefore, in this mood, he came to cull out and to revise such of his humorous and satirical writings produced during the American Revolution as he then chose to avow, it was but natural that he should be inclined to tone down their partisan vivacity, and to blunt somewhat the edge of their sarcasms.[1]

We need to have constantly in mind the great sequences of thought and of passion which made up the long word-battle of the American Revolution; and we should note, in general, that after the colossal debate which began in 1764 had reached, just twelve years afterward, its tragic culmination, and an apparent majority of the American people had passed the crisis of final decision, and had solemnly cast in their lot to live or die in the effort to gain their Independence,—from that time onward to the very end, a Whig satirist, like Hopkinson, would be likely to conclude that it was his business, with that fine-edged weapon which it was given him to wield, to fight just two sorts of enemies, first, the British generals and their troops—the armed invaders and desolators of his country, and, secondly, his own hostile fellow-countrymen, the American Loyalists.

The first class of enemies, it is now obvious, were hated by the champions of the Revolution far less vehemently than the second class. Of course, the former—the armed invaders and desolators of America—were hated vigorously enough; but, in reality, human language was altogether too feeble to give utterance to the loathing, the scorn, the bottomless and boundless detestation with which the American Whigs regarded the men of their own households and neighborhoods who did not join them in their great agony

[1] Noble as was this mood in its origin and purpose, its result could not fail to be a hindrance to the historic method in dealing with any portion of any literature. No modern student of the Revolutionary writings of Hopkinson can be sure that he is handling the original document, or that he is getting the full impression which it was written to produce, if he reads any production of Hopkinson only in the form in which Hopkinson himself finally left it in his collected works.

of patriotic effort, but who, as they believed, were secretly plotting against them, were giving help and comfort to the invaders, were working, often by tortuous ways and along secret and underground passages, to compass the defeat of this reluctant but most necessary and most perilous movement for national deliverance. In this feeling toward both classes of enemies, Francis Hopkinson, no doubt, had his full share; and yet it was in accordance with his intellectual quality, to express it less grimly than did his two chief associates in political satire. As their treatment of the enemy constantly tended toward sheer invective, so his as constantly inclined toward a use of ridicule which, while it was keen and tingling, and at times even tormenting, generally had a facetious note, almost never an angry one.

IV.

Before the close of the year 1776,—the fatal year in which those Americans who stood for their rights were persuaded to cast behind them in great sorrow the last hope of reconciliation with England,—Hopkinson began that long series of his writings which deal, either seriously or humorously, with the persons and the issues of a controversy that had finally taken to itself every dark hue of fierceness and desperation. One of the first efforts of his pen under these altered conditions, was peculiarly characteristic of him, and of his ability to be severe without being either violent or uncivil: it was "A Letter to Lord Howe"[1]—a letter at once eloquent, grave, pathetic, and stinging—written in December, 1776, in the midst of the havoc and horror occasioned by Sir William Howe's advance across New Jersey in pursuit of the flying troops of Washington.

The year 1777, which was to contain such appalling events as the invasion of New York by General Burgoyne, and the invasion of Pennsylvania by Sir William Howe, was ushered in with a solitary gleam of light cast upon the desperate

[1] "The Miscellaneous Essays," etc., i. 121–126.

situation in consequence of Washington's brilliant strokes against the enemy at Trenton and at Princeton. Very shortly after these exploits, and while the royal army was still "lying in Brunswick mortified and crestfallen,"[1] Hopkinson sent out to his fellow-countrymen "A Political Catechism,"[2] in which the questions and answers, being framed after the familiar model of a religious catechism, and in language level to the minds of the unlearned and even of children, give a most lucid, terse, and pungent presentation of the history of the war down to that moment, of its two great antithetic personages, George the Third and George Washington, and finally of the rightfulness of the cause on behalf of which the manliest of Americans, as Hopkinson believed, were then putting their lives at stake.

It was, also, early in this year 1777,—a year for whose vast menace to the American cause the most heroic preparation would be needed,—that Hopkinson stirred and lifted the hearts of his fellow-countrymen by his "Camp Ballad":

"Make room, oh! ye kingdoms in hist'ry renowned,—
Whose arms have in battle with glory been crowned,—
Make room for America,—another great nation
Arising[3] to claim in your council a station.

. . . . . .

"With glory immortal she here sits enthroned,
Nor fears the vain vengeance of Britain disowned;
Whilst Washington guards her, with heroes surrounded,
Her foes shall with shameful defeat be confounded.

"To arms, then, to arms!—'t is fair freedom invites us;
The trumpet, shrill sounding, to battle excites us;
The banners of virtue unfurled shall wave o'er us,
Our heroes lead on, and the foe fly before us.

[1] "The Miscellaneous Essays," etc., i. 118. [2] Ibid. 111–120.
[3] The text reads, Arises.

"On Heaven and Washington placing reliance,
We 'll meet the bold Briton, and bid him defiance;
Our cause we 'll support, for 't is just and 't is glorious—
When men fight for freedom, they must be victorious." [1]

As, however, this year 1777 wore on from spring into summer, and while it remained still doubtful just where Sir William Howe, from his headquarters in the city of New York, intended to deliver the great blow which was expected of him, the eyes of men were turned with unspeakable anxiety toward the further north—toward Lake George—whence General Burgoyne, with a most formidable army, was about to advance upon the lower Hudson, with the purpose of cutting in two, by that single stroke, the insurrectionary colonies, and then of suppressing all further resistance in each of the two territorial sections thus disabled from helping each other.

If we would in any just measure appreciate the quality and the effectiveness of the bit of work wrought by the humor of Hopkinson in this dire emergency, we must realize the exact situation of affairs, particularly the awful gravity of the danger, in that early summer of 1777, when Burgoyne and his army hung like some frightful storm-cloud along the northern sky. Indeed, our own memories of Burgoyne are apt to concentrate themselves upon the fact that he was defeated and captured, with all his mighty host: perhaps we have never sufficiently considered how very near he came to defeating us, and how fatal to the cause of American Independence his victory over us might have been. It was not, however, until October, 1777, that Burgoyne was defeated and made prisoner. It is natural for us to think of him simply in the light of that final event—an event which extinguished him forever as a serious incident in American affairs; but during all of the summer and early autumn preceding that event, those of our ancestors who were to meet him and to fight him and who were by no

[1] "Poems on Several Subjects," 174–175.

means confident of the result of their expected interview with him, could think of Burgoyne and his army only as a dreadful menace, only as a very actual and a very terrific danger. All this needs to be taken into the account by us, when we turn to some record of the official documents of that time, and read for ourselves the gusty and pot-valiant proclamation[1] which Burgoyne issued from his camp at Ticonderoga, on the second of July, 1777,—breathing out threatenings and slaughter, nay, "devastation, famine, and every concomitant horror" against "the hardened enemies of Britain and America."[2] Undoubtedly, Burgoyne's proclamation, which opened with a magnificent list of his own titles, offices, and honors, and which was apparently composed throughout on the theory that the wretched Americans were somehow to be overwhelmed and brought to their senses by the mere reverberation of his huge-sounding threats, remains for all time a masterpiece of military gasconading and of thunder-dealing rhetoric. As such its absurdity is obvious enough to us who are aware of the ridiculous anti-climax to which it was destined on the field of Stillwater, some three months after it was published; but to those Americans who first read it, while it was a grandiloquent threat indeed, it was also a grandiloquent threat with a great army behind it. It was, therefore, even from a military point of view, no slight service that Hopkinson rendered to the cause of the Revolution, when he sent out broadcast over the land a counter-proclamation, addressed, according to the noble style assumed by the great general himself, to "John Burgoyne, Esquire, Lieutenant-General of his Majesty's Armies in America, Colonel of the Queen's Regiment of Light Dragoons, Governor of Fort William in North Britain, one of the

[1] It may be found in Niles, "Principles and Acts of the Rev.," 262–264, where it is followed by Hopkinson's burlesque, which Niles has printed without Hopkinson's name. It is also given by W. L. Stone, in "Ballads and Poems relating to the Burgoyne Campaign," Appendix III.

[2] These words are part of the proclamation. Niles, "Prin. and Acts," 263.

Representatives of the Commons of Great Britain, and commanding an Army and Fleet employed on an Expedition from Canada, etc., etc., etc."[1] This counter-proclamation, which was from first to last a most delicious burlesque on Burgoyne's manifesto, fitted exactly the mood and the need of the moment: it was everywhere read amid roars of laughter over a situation in which, truly, there was much to give alarm, but with respect to which mere laughter was an antidote to a popular panic. So long as men can be made to laugh, sonorously and convulsively, over the ridiculous aspects of a dangerous situation, they are not likely to be stampeded by it in a paroxysm of fright. Precisely this contribution toward the defeat and capture of Burgoyne was rendered, in the summer of 1777, by the humor of Francis Hopkinson.[2]

In the midst of the humiliation which, both in America and in Europe, Burgoyne's surrender brought upon the British cause, Hopkinson produced a ballad bearing the suggestive title, "Date Obolum Belisario." In this ballad, Britannia is depicted as a wretched woman—

> "All seated on the ground,
> With oaken staff and hat of straw,
> And tatters hanging round."

As the poet approaches her, she asks an alms:

> "A wretch forlorn, kind sir, you see,
> That begs from door to door;
> Oh! stop and give for charity,
> A penny to the poor!"

With the usual promtitude of beggars in autobiographic recitals, she then proceeds to lavish upon him her story,

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[1] "The Miscellaneous Essays," etc., i. 146–150.

[2] Burgoyne's Proclamation was travestied in verse by Governor William Livingston. This is given by W. L. Stone, in "Burgoyne Ballads," 7–15.

telling him of the better days she had seen, of her former wealth and power and splendor, of her children and her friends, and especially of the way in which she had been brought to poverty and misery through the misconduct of her youngest son, whose name, she intimates, was George; nor does she forget, in conclusion, the little matter appertaining to the much-desired obolus:

"A magic wand I once possessed,
A cap aloft it bore;
Of all my treasures this the best,
And none I valued more.

. . . . . .

"A shield and lance once graced these hands,
Perhaps you 've heard my fame;
For I was known in distant lands—
Britannia is my name.

"Britannia now in rags you see—
I beg from door to door;
Oh! give, kind sir, for charity,
A penny to the poor." [1]

V.

Such was the relation of Francis Hopkinson as a humorist to the first of the great British expeditions of the year 1777—that of Burgoyne. The second expedition, under the command of Sir William Howe, resulted in considerable temporary disaster to the American cause, namely, the defeat of Washington both at Brandywine and at Germantown, and the British occupation of Philadelphia. Never-

[1] "Poems on Several Subjects," 164–168.

theless, it was this very expedition, so full of prosperity for the British, which in its sequel gave to Hopkinson the occasion for his most successful stroke as a humorous writer. It is well known that Sir William Howe, having in his rather tardy campaign for that year gained, almost in spite of himself, a brief succession of victories over the American rebels, then forbore to take advantage of people thus fallen, through his agency, into depressed circumstances; and, finding Philadelphia an extremely agreeable place of repose for a warrior who had already had enough of war for that particular season, he concluded to settle himself down in that gracious city, there to await with his officers and men the arrival of the next summer's campaign. Thenceforward, during all the autumn and the winter and the spring, he refrained as much as possible from aggressive military enterprises, which, besides being likely to prove disagreeable to the Americans, would have brought, of course, some inconvenience upon himself. This mighty general had, indeed, a truly martial fondness for the smiles of pretty women, for balls and routs, for dinners, theatricals, heavy gaming, and heavy drinking; and he chose to dedicate those flying hours which were given to him in Philadelphia, to that mode of existence which the moralists have been wont to describe as riotous living.

With a military sybarite like this in Philadelphia, the surrounding inhabitants, who had at first regarded him and his army with no little terror, soon came to regard both with some derision, and to conceive the idea of practising upon both certain experiments which had in them an element of covert mirthfulness as it were. One of these semi-jocose experiments seems to have been prepared near the little village where Hopkinson lived,—the village of Bordentown on the Delaware, a few miles above Philadelphia[1]; and it was by a

[1] It is by no means certain that Bordentown was the place where the machines were prepared; but it is certain that they were the invention of David Bushnell of Connecticut, much devoted to improvements in submarine warfare. In this undertaking he was accompanied by a person who knew the Delaware

very imaginative and a very rollicking expansion of the actual facts of this small affair, that Hopkinson was enabled to compose his celebrated ballad, "The Battle of the Kegs."[1]

The actual facts of the case are as follows, according to Hopkinson's own later testimony in prose: "Certain machines, in the form of kegs, charged with gunpowder, were sent down the river to annoy the British shipping at Philadelphia. The danger of these machines being discovered, the British manned the wharfs and shipping, and discharged their small arms and cannons at everything they saw floating in the river during the ebb tide."[2]

Certainly, in the hands of a poet with uncommon facility at humorous invention, here was ample material for a comic ballad; and Hopkinson failed not to make proper use of his opportunity. In the first place, he contrived with no little art to prepare the public for his ballad, by publishing in "The New Jersey Gazette"[3] an amusing prose description of the alleged panic into which the mysterious kegs had thrown the British sailors and soldiers in Philadelphia, and of their excited and most redoubtable onslaught, with fire and sword and battle cry, upon these same kegs, which, as some of the brave Britons declared, "were filled with armed rebels, who were to issue forth in the dead of night, as the Grecians did of old from their wooden horse at the siege of

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River, but in the darkness mistook the situation and occasioned the error of placing the kegs too far from the British shipping. Bushnell's own account of the affair is in "Transactions of the American Philosophical Society," iv. 312.

[1] "Poems on Several Subjects," 169–173.

[2] Ibid. 173 n.

[3] For January 21, 1778. Though no one else, so far as I am aware, has called attention to it, I do not hesitate, both from internal and from collateral evidence, to speak of this prose narrative of the "Battle of the Kegs" as one of Hopkinson's many unacknowledged writings. A reprint of it may be seen in Frank Moore, "Diary of the American Revolution," ii. 5–6; and it is from this that I here quote. On the other hand, "The Pennsylvania Ledger," for February 11, 1778, takes the trouble to deny that anybody was frightened by the mysterious kegs, declaring that they were merely fired at, in passing, from some of the transport vessels in the river. "Mag. Am. Hist.," viii. 296.

Troy, and take the city by surprise,—asserting that they had seen the points of their bayonets through the bung-holes of the kegs." This prose story, printed as the sober testimony of an eye-witness in Philadelphia, and recounting in seeming sincerity one of the most ludicrous battles ever fought since wars began, put the people everywhere, as it was intended to do, into a frame of mind appreciative of the same story when laid before them, as it was soon afterward, in the form of a jocose street-ballad. It is mere matter of history to add, that this jingling little story of "The Battle of the Kegs"—mere doggerel though it is—flew from colony to colony, in those grim early months of the year 1778, like some merry messenger of gay tidings; and that, in many a camp, and along a thousand highroads, and by ten thousand patriot firesides, it gave the weary and anxious people the luxury of genuine and hearty laughter in very scorn of the enemy. To the cause of the Revolution, it was perhaps worth as much, just then, by way of emotional tonic and of military inspiration, as the winning of a considerable battle would have been.

From a literary point of view, "The Battle of the Kegs" is very far from being the best of Hopkinson's writings. Nevertheless, for its matter and its manner and for the adaptation of both to the immediate enjoyment of the multitude of readers, it became in his own day the best known of all its author's productions, even as, since then, it is the only one that has retained any general remembrance in our literature.

VI.

Passing, now, from the writings of Hopkinson against the armed invaders of his country, it is time for us to glance rapidly at his principal writings against that party of his fellow-countrymen who were in sympathy with those invaders. We may note, at the outset, the quiet ridicule with which he deals with the Tories on the side of their

social prepossessions. From the beginning to the end of the war, a prodigious obstacle to the Revolutionary cause was the social prestige, the purple dignity, the aristocratic flavor of the Tory side of the question; and Hopkinson, having the shrewdness to see that a portion of American Toryism had its origin in mere snobbish sentiment, spoke of having known a lady "who did not possess one political principle, nor had any precise idea of the real cause of the contest between Great Britain and America, and yet was a professed and confirmed Tory, merely from the fascination of sounds. 'The imperial crown,' 'the royal robes,' 'the high court of parliament,' 'the lord chancellor of England,' and so on, were words of irresistible influence; whilst 'Captain A. the tailor,' 'Colonel B. the tavern-keeper,' and even 'General Washington the farmer,' only created contempt. But I am persuaded, if some Indian chief, with a long Cherokee or Mohawk name, had commanded our armies, she would have thought much more respectably of the American cause." [1]

A more pungent specimen of his satire is "The Birds, the Beasts, and the Bat," [2] a fable in Hudibrastic verse, intended to portray the political trimmer of the Revolution, —the American who was a Whig or a Tory, from day to day, according to the state of the military weather,—that is, the creature who like the bat, was part bird and part beast; but who was always ready to proclaim himself as all bird when the birds were in luck, and as all beast when the beasts seemed likely to win.

A strong piece of work, and in a vein altogether different —that of invective—was his "Letter to Joseph Galloway, Esquire," [3] published in 1778, and accusing that preëminent Loyalist of treachery to his country and to his friends, and

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[1] "The Miscellaneous Essays," etc., ii. 55–56. The passage above quoted appears to have been written after the war, but it is available as an illustration of his method of dealing with the Tories even during the war.

[2] "Poems on Several Subjects," 177–180.

[3] "The Miscellaneous Essays," etc., i. 127–131.

of nearly every crime by which unscrupulous ambition may seek to climb the steps of power.

At some time during the year 1776, Hopkinson touched very skilfully the nerve of American enmity toward the Loyalists, by publishing "Two Letters," written apparently by a member of that detested party, and avowing with boastful and exasperating frankness those servile political sentiments and those unscrupulous practices which were then attributed to them by their American opponents. Here, without any disguise, is the master-principle of their party:—"Mr. Printer, I am a Tory, the son of a Tory, born and bred in the pure principles of unconditional submission, and a true friend to the Hanoverian family, right or wrong and at all events. . . . But the infatuated people of this most vile portion of this most vile planet have been moved by the instigation of the devil to oppose the earnest desire of George the Third—God bless his majesty!—to govern them in all cases whatsoever, according to his good will and pleasure. For my own part, I truly abominate and abhor their rebellious obstinacy. His majesty hath been pleased, in his great goodness, and to my unspeakable satisfaction, to send over his fleets and armies to conquer and subdue this horrible country. Now, it is the indispensable duty of all those who would be called the friends of arbitrary government and of the said George the Third, to render all the assistance in their power to the fleets and armies, and to the worthy lords and generals whom this worthy and benign monarch hath commissioned to direct and manage them."[1]

Among the many methods devised by the loyal inhabitants of America for aiding their king in his noble undertaking, one is the formation of a club of Tories, the members of which are parcelled off into committees for promoting in their several ways the success of the king's troops,—such as "the committee of wiles and stratagems," "the committee of extortion," "the committee of depreciation," "the

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[1] "The Miscellaneous Essays," etc., i. 132–133.

committee of false reports," and "the committee of lies." Probably none of these committees are more active or more important than the last two. The duty of "the committee of false reports" is "to circulate misrepresentations of facts respecting the armies, and things of a public nature, on the large scale," [1] so as "to alarm and terrify timid Whigs, and distract the minds of the people." [2] The duty of the committee of lies, however, is somewhat different: it is to "frame temporary lies" for the use of the city of Philadelphia, "particularly respecting the deliberations and intentions of Congress. These lies must be fresh, and fresh every day, and always supported by a strong assertion that the information came from some leaky member of Congress, generally without mentioning the name of any individual member; yet, in cases of urgency, the real name of some leading character may be adduced, when the lie may have had its operation before it can be contradicted." [3]

Of course, in this world, all good men have their calumniators. The Tories are no exception to this rule. "Some narrow-minded people say, that we are doing all we can to ruin our country, and entail a miserable slavery on our unborn posterity. We believe we are doing the best we can for ourselves—and, pray, what has posterity done for us, that we should run the risk of confiscation and a halter for them? . . . 'T is true, if the British generals should succeed in their enterprise, we may see our neighbors and friends imprisoned by hundreds, and hanged by dozens, their estates confiscated, and their children turned out to beggary and want; but, then, we shall ourselves escape, and enjoy in safety our lives and estates—and, perhaps, be even promoted for our present services to places of honor and emolument." [4]

No vein of satire against the enemy, and particularly against the Tories, was more expertly worked by Hopkinson than the one exhibited in these "Two Letters,"

[1] "The Miscellaneous Essays," etc., i. 139.
[2] Ibid. 138.
[3] Ibid. 139–140.
[4] Ibid. 141.

namely, the systematic use of lies as a weapon of war. In "A Letter to the Editor of the New Jersey Gazette," in January, 1778, he called attention once more to the immense importance attached by the enemy to this powerful weapon, declaring that "as soon as the Howes got to New York, they appointed their Liar General, who played off innumerable lies from the batteries of Rivington and Gaine"[1]; and that the same thing was done by them immediately after they had taken possession of Philadelphia.[2] Here, then, was a method of warfare not to be neglected by the people against whom it has thus far been so vigorously employed. Of course, "nothing would be more vain than to attempt to counteract these productions of the British Lying Offices in New York and Philadelphia, with serious answers of truth and reason. Like must be opposed to like. And, therefore, I hope that Congress will no longer delay to establish Lying Offices on our side of the question, with handsome salaries annexed, and would especially recommend this my project to their serious consideration. Let there be an advertisement forthwith published by authority, to the following effect: 'Wanted, for the continental service, a person well qualified for the office of Liar General to the United States. Also, three assistants, or petit-liars, in said office. Those who are willing and able to serve their country in this department, are requested to send in their names to . . . on or before the first day of March next. As it is supposed there may be a number of persons well versed in this art amongst the Tories, free pardon and good encouragement will be given to such as will exert their lying faculties in favor of their country. N. B. Specimens of ability will be required of candidates.'"[3]

Perhaps nothing that Hopkinson wrote during the Revolution can give one a truer impression of the sprightliness and the delicacy of his humor, than the jeu d'esprit which he published shortly after the surrender of Cornwallis, and

[1] "The Miscellaneous Essays," etc., i. 143–144.

[2] Ibid. 144.

[3] Ibid. 145.

with which he may be said to have closed his work as a Revolutionary satirist. This is a mock advertisement, bearing the name of James Rivington and dated at New York, November 1, 1781, wherein Hopkinson contrives, not only to exhibit with great drollery the state of mind into which poor Rivington is supposed to have been thrown by the appalling news from Yorktown, but likewise to scatter the shafts of ridicule along the entire line of the royal and ministerial project for subjugating America. Rivington's printing-office and book-shop in New York had been regarded during the whole war as the very citadel and pest-house of American Toryism; while his newspaper, "The Royal Gazette," had always been "exceedingly virulent, abusive, and illiberal" against the Americans, their Congress, their army, their officers, and their measures. "Every paper abounded" according to the Whig view of things, "with the grossest falsities, misrepresentations, and insults."[1] If there was in America any Loyalist who must realize that the downfall of the British cause meant the necessity of his own speedy exit from the scene, it was James Rivington. Accordingly, he is here represented as publishing in his newspaper an "Advertisement," over his own name, announcing that as "the late surrender of Lord Cornwallis and his army, together with a variety of other circumstances," had "rendered it convenient for the subscriber to remove to Europe," he requests the favor of an immediate settlement of all his accounts in America, and likewise offers for sale at public auction at an early day, the whole of "his remaining stock in trade," consisting of "books," "plays," "maps and prints," "philosophical apparatus," and "patent medicines." Then follows a partial catalogue:

"BOOKS.

"The History of the American War; or, the Glorious Exploits of the British Generals, Gage, Howe, Burgoyne, Cornwallis, and Clinton.

[1] "The Miscellaneous Essays," etc., i. 159.

The Royal Pocket Companion: Being a New System of Policy, founded on Rules deduced from the Nature of Man, and proved by Experience, whereby a Prince may in a short time render himself the Abhorrence of his Subjects, and the Contempt of all good and wise Men.

Select Fables of Æsop, with suitable Morals and Applications. Amongst which are,—'The Dog and his Shadow,' 'The Man and His Goose which laid a Golden Egg,' etc., etc.

A New System of Cruelty: Containing a Variety of modern Improvements in that Art. Embellished with an elegant Frontispiece, representing an inside View of a Prison Ship.

The Right of Great Britain to the Dominion of the Sea—a Poetical Fiction.

The State of Great Britain in October, 1760, and October, 1781, compared and contrasted.

A Geographical, Historical, and Political History of the Rights and Possessions of the Crown of Great Britain in North America. This valuable Work did consist of thirteen volumes in Folio, but is now abridged by a Royal Author to a single Pocket Duodecimo, for the greater Convenience of Himself, his Successors, and Subjects.

. . . . . .

Tears of Repentance: or, the Present State of the Loyal Refugees in New York, and elsewhere.

The Political Liar: a Weekly Paper, published by the Subscriber, bound in Volumes.

. . . . . .

"MAPS AND PRINTS.

"An Elegant Map of the British Empire in North America, upon a very small Scale.

An Accurate Chart of the Coast of North America, from New Hampshire to Florida; with the Soundings of all the principal Inlets, Bays, Harbors, and Rivers. This

Work was undertaken and completed by his Majesty's special command, and at a national expense of many millions of Guineas, thousands of Men, and hundreds of Merchantmen and Royal Ships of War.

A Survey of Lord Cornwallis's Route through the Southern Colonies, beginning at Charleston in South Carolina, and terminating at York, in Virginia. As the preceding Chart gives an accurate description of the Sea Coast, so it was intended to form a correct Map of the interior Parts of this Country; but the rude Inhabitants grew jealous of the Operation, and actually opposed his Lordship's Progress.

The Battle of Saratoga, and the Surrender at York: Two elegant Prints, cut in Copper, and dedicated to the King.

. . . . . .

" PHILOSOPHICAL APPARATUS.

" A curious new-invented Magic Lanthorn: very useful for those who are at the head of affairs. This machine was constructed by an able artist, under Lord North's immediate direction, for the amusement of the good people of England. The spectators are gratified with an illuminated view of the fictitious objects presented, but kept totally in the dark with respect to the real objects around them.

. . . . . .

Microscopes, for magnifying small objects, furnished with a select set ready fitted for use. Amongst these are a variety of real and supposed successes of the British Generals in America.

A Complete Electrical Apparatus, with improvements, for the use of the King and his Ministers. The machine should be exercised with great caution; otherwise, as experience hath shown, the operator may unexpectedly receive the shock he intends to give.

Pocket Glasses for Short-sighted Politicians.

"PATENT MEDICINES.

"Aurum Potabile. This preparation was formerly supposed to be a never-failing specific, but has been found not so well adapted to the American climate, having been frequently tried here without effect. But its reputation is again rising, as it has lately been administered with success to General Arnold.

Vivifying Balsam: excellent for weak nerves, palpitations of the heart, over-bashfulness, and diffidence. In great demand for the officers of the army.

Sp. Men. Or, the genuine Spirit of Lying. Extracted by distillation from many hundreds of 'The Royal Gazette of New York.' . . .

Cordial Drops for Low Spirits: prepared for the special use of the Honorable the Board of Loyal Refugees at New York.

Anodyne Elixir, for quieting fears and apprehensions. Very necessary for Tories in all parts of America.

With a great variety of other articles too tedious to enumerate.

N. B. To every purchaser to the value of five Pounds, will be delivered gratis, one quire of counterfeit Continental Currency. Also, two quires of Proclamations offering Pardon to Rebels."[1]

[1] "The Miscellaneous Essays," etc., i. 159–169.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SATIRES, SONGS, AND BALLADS FOR AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

I.—Revolutionist satire in its minor and incidental forms—The partisan's intolerance of moderation and neutrality—Epigram on the Middlesex resolutions—The change in American feeling toward George the Third, from reverence to execration—The King as an object of satire—Lines on his inverted portrait—The cynical tone in American verse in the months preceding the capture of Burgoyne—The "Prophecy" written on an egg-shell —"Another Prophecy," by the "Genius of America"—Epigrams on Burgoyne—Satires on the traitor Arnold.

II.—Charles Henry Wharton, and his satire on English political corruption, in "A Poetical Epistle to George Washington," 1779—The poet's ideal of an American commonwealth.

III.—Francis Lieber's estimate of the Anglican race as writers of national songs—Grouping of the political and military songs of the American Revolution.

IV.—Some of the song-writers of the Revolution,—Prime, McClurg, Howell, Oliver Arnold, Humphreys, Barlow, Dwight—The latter's "Columbia," 1777.

V.—Nathaniel Niles, and "The American Hero, a Sapphic Ode," 1775.

VI.—The nobler mood of the American mind in 1776—Its faith and fortitude as expressed in "The American Patriot's Prayer."

VII.—"The American Soldier's Hymn."

VIII.—Characteristics of the ballads of the Revolution—"Liberty's Call," 1775—"A Song for the Red-Coats," and "The Fate of John Burgoyne," 1777—"Brave Paulding and the Spy," 1780—"Battle of King's Mountain," 1781—"The Wyoming Massacre" and "Bold Hawthorne."

IX.—Captain Nathan Hale, the American Spy—Compared with André—His arrest within the British lines—His hard fate—The ballad of "Hale in the Bush."

I.

ELSEWHERE in this book, it has been shewn that at a certain stage of the Revolutionary controversy, satire became, on both sides, a principal weapon in the literary

warfare then waged, and that in the use of that weapon each side was able to point to at least two or three expert and powerful masters. So far as the spirit of the great quarrel is thus preserved in satirical writings, it is to be traced, in its strongest and most authentic form, in the work of Stansbury and Odell, on the one hand, and of Hopkinson, Trumbull, and Freneau on the other.

Nevertheless, while these writers are the chief exponents of the satiric mood throughout the later period of the dispute, that mood found abundant expression, likewise, in a multitude of forms less elaborate and less masterful indeed, and yet not lacking in sprightliness and point, and not unworthy of a passing glance as examples of one very characteristic method of literary expression in a time of fiery and implacable controversy. The newspapers of the Revolutionary period are strown with such productions,—satirical poems, long and short, of nearly all degrees of merit and demerit, some of them gross and obscene, some of them simply clownish and stupid, some absolutely brutal in their partisan ferocity, some really clever—terse, polished, and edged with wit. As students of the intellectual and emotional development of the Revolution, we may not altogether disregard even these casual, unowned, and flitting tokens of a sincere literary partisanship.

Of course, to men who are themselves imbued with the Revolutionary passion, no attitude in others is apt to seem quite so intolerable as that of neutrality or even of moderation in partisanship. Our Revolution abounds with examples of this statement. Thus, in 1774, to take but a single example, an assemblage of Loyalists in Middlesex county, Virginia, passed a series of resolutions deprecating all violent measures in opposition to the government,—an incident which was made the text for an epigram, all the more cutting as being written by a woman:

> "To manhood he makes vain pretense,
> Who wants both manly force and sense:
> . . . . . .

From such a creature, Heaven defend her!
Each lady cries—'No neuter gender!'
But, when a number of such creatures,
With woman's hearts and manly features,
Their country's generous schemes perplex,
I own—I hate this Middle-sex!"[1]

The hatred for Tories and for Toryism, thus avowed in 1774, never failed or faltered in quantity or force till long after the Revolution ended, if indeed it can be said to have failed or faltered even yet. And in the fullness of Revolutionary wrath, there came a time when, to the majority of Americans, the greatest and hatefulest Tory of all, on either side of the Atlantic, was King George himself. During all the bitterness of the first decade of the struggle, the theory had been carefully cherished among us that, not upon the good king, but upon his wicked advisers, upon his false and blood-thirsty agents, was to be laid the blame for all the tyranny that had come or was coming,—a pleasant fiction which was diligently preserved and promulgated even in the manifestoes of the American Congress, and until near the close of the year 1775. So immense was the arc of emotion through which the people passed, that, after the adoption of the purpose of Independence, and as if moved by a spontaneous impulse, they everywhere tore down from their houses all emblems and memorials of the king; they changed the names of streets and public places which had commemorated their love and reverence for him and for his family; and even the halfpence which bore the image and superscription of George the Third, were either refused when offered as money or were degraded into farthings. Of all this tremendous revulsion of feeling toward the king, a very touching example was seen in many private houses, where his portrait, once held in so much honor, was left hanging in its place, but with its face turned to the wall. In one mansion, however, a

[1] F. Moore, "Songs and Ballads," 68 n.

more dramatic denunciation of the king was resorted to: the portrait of his majesty, having been lifted from the nail on which it had hung, was simply placed upon the floor and there left leaning against the wall—but with the head downward, while some lines were written beneath it, as if to deepen, if possible, this spectacular testimony of American hatred and contempt:

"Behold the man, who had it in his power
To make a kingdom tremble and adore.
Intoxicate with folly, see his head
Placed where the meanest of his subjects tread.
Like Lucifer, the giddy tyrant fell:
He lifts his heel to Heaven, but points his head to Hell."[1]

So, as the drama of the Revolution moved on from Scene to Scene, from Act to Act, there appeared to be standing by a sort of chorus of patriotic poetasters, who, with jest and scoff and invective, flung out in blunt or biting verse their free comments on such of the actors as they disapproved of, and upon such of the things done or attempted as went counter to their wishes,—first of all, Toryism, in all its shapes and manners, in all its champions and confederates; next, the principalities and powers in Great Britain which were resolved upon our subjugation; and, finally, all the civilized or savage tools of ministerial policy, and all their projects, blunders, successes, and failures, to the last action and passion of the conflict.

The spring and summer of the year 1777 seem to stand out in our annals as a season of extraordinary dread and gloom on the part of the friends of the Revolution. In some of the writings of that time is to be heard a note of almost cynical bitterness, as in these lines added to one version of a patriotic song then given to the public:

"The times, it seems, are altered quite;
The scales are cracked, the sword is broke,

[1] "Works of John Adams," ii. 434.

Right is now wrong, and wrong is right,
And justice is a standing joke." [1]

Notwithstanding the glimmer of good cheer brought in by the two little dashes of success during the previous winter, at Trenton and Princeton, the general effect of the heavy defeats suffered by our arms within the latter half of 1776, was still weighing upon the popular imagination; nor was this burden in any way lightened by the fact that two powerful armies, one under Howe, one under Burgoyne, were apparently getting ready to sever all connection between the three great groups of States then in rebellion, after which it might seem an easy thing to conquer and crush each of these groups in its turn. In spite of Howe's lack of enterprise in the campaign of 1776, and of his obvious failure to push his advantages, his reputation among us was still a most formidable fact. Under the uncertainty as to what he might do that summer with the force at his command, his name was still a name to conjure with. It is an odd token of the various methods and weapons for public influence then resorted to on both sides, that the solemn announcement was made of the discovery of an egg which had been laid by an inspired hen in the ancient town of Plymouth, and which bore upon its shell, in legible characters, "A Prophecy," in these dreadful words: "Oh, oh, America! Howe shall be thy conqueror." Of course, so appalling a prediction was not likely to be suffered to travel about the country without being met by some counter-prediction, which, accordingly, was very soon supplied by the "Genius of America" in "Another Prophecy," of which these are the closing lines:—

"When eggs can speak what fools indite,
And hens can talk, as well as write;
When crocodiles shed honest tears,
And truth with hypocrites appears;

[1] This stanza was added to a song on "The Times," beginning, "My Muse, now thy aid and assistance we claim." F. Moore, "Ballad History," 200–201.

When every man becomes a knave,
And feels the spirit of the slave;
And when veracity again
Shall in a Tory's bosom reign;
When vice is virtue, darkness light,
And freemen are afraid to fight;
When they forget to play the men,
And with the spirit of a hen
Desert the just and sacred cause,
And opening Heaven smiles applause
On such a bloody, barbarous foe,—
Then I 'll be conquered by a Howe!"[1]

As to Burgoyne, it is easy for us now, as it was for Thackeray some forty years ago, to imagine that grandiose hero "tripping off from St. James's Street to conquer the Americans, and slinking back into the club somewhat crestfallen after his beating."[2] We cannot wonder that the derisive comments of our American chorus upon the unparalleled fiasco which closed his word-thunderous career among us, were not at all tempered by delicacy or by self-restraint. To recall only two of these choric gibes will doubtless be quite enough:

(a)

"Burgoyne, alas, unknowing future fates,
Could force his way through woods, but not through Gates."[3]

(b)

"In seventeen hundred-and-seventy-seven,[4]
General Burgoyne set out for Heaven;

[1] Given in full in F. Moore, "Songs and Ballads," etc., 160–162.

[2] "The Four Georges," 69.

[3] This epigram, said to have been written by David Edwards, was published in the newspapers shortly after Burgoyne's surrender. Some account of Edwards is given by W. L. Stone, in his "Burgoyne Ballads," 66–68 n. The authorship of this epigram has also been claimed for a Westminister School-boy, who is said to have composed it in Latin on the subject of "Saratoga"—that word having been given out for the day's exercise in Latin verse. Stone thinks this claim to be "without foundation."

[4] "Burgoyne Ballads." 66. This epigram is said to have been kept in

But, as the Yankees would rebel,
He missed his route, and went—to Hell."

The discovery of the treason of Benedict Arnold, in 1780, stirred the abhorrence of the American people more deeply, perhaps, than did any other event of the war. Of course, this emotion expressed itself in an infinite variety of forms; but of those merely in the form of verse sarcastic, a fair example is afforded by certain lines "To the Traitor Arnold," published in "The Pennsylvania Packet" for October 24, 1780:[1]

"Arnold! thy name, as heretofore,
Shall now be Benedict no more;
Since, instigated by the devil,
Thy ways are turned from good to evil.
'T is fit we brand thee with a name
To suit thy infamy and shame;
And since of treason thou 'rt convicted,
Thy name should now be Maledict-ed.
. . . . . .
And odious for the blackest crimes,
Arnold shall stink to latest times."

In the same number of the paper which contained the lines just given, appeared this epigram on the visible result of the bargain between Arnold and Sir Henry Clinton:

"'T was Arnold's post Sir Harry sought,
Arnold ne'er entered in his thought.
How ends the bargain? Let us see,—
The fort is safe as safe can be:

memory in Vermont for many years after the Revolution. It is one result, perhaps, of the theological training of the period, that the wits and satirists on both sides of the controversy were so facile in despatching their antagonists to Hell,—a penal institution of easy access to all, and therefore singularly useful to a heated debater who otherwise might have been at a loss to know just how to make final disposition of the party of the other part.

[1] A copy of this paper is in the library of the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

His favorite perforce must die ;
His view 's laid bare to every eye ;
His money 's gone—and lo ! he gains
One scoundrel more for all his pains.
André was generous, true, and brave,
And in his room he buys a knave.
'T is sure ordained that Arnold cheats
All those, of course, with whom he treats.
Now let the devil suspect a bite—
Or Arnold cheats him of his right."

Henceforth, the name of Arnold was seldom mentioned by any Revolutionist writer without its being coupled with that of Satan, between whom and the traitor the intercourse was assumed to be both familiar and without intermission. Thus, the "New Jersey Gazette," for November 1, 1780, was enabled to report this quite affectionate conversation as having then recently taken place between the two distinguished personages:

"Quoth Satan to Arnold ; 'My worthy good fellow,
I love you much better that ever I did ;
You live like a prince, with Hal [1] may get mellow,—
But mind that you both do just what I bid.'

"Quoth Arnold to Satan : 'My friend, do not doubt me !
I will strictly adhere to all your great views ;
To you I 'm devoted, with all things about me—
You 'll permit me, I hope, to die in my shoes.'" [2]

II.

From these trifles in political satire, it is pleasant to turn to a deliberate and a noble poem of the year 1779, which, while breathing high eulogy of the Revolutionist cause

[1] Sir Henry Clinton. [2] F. Moore, "Diary of the Am. Rev.," ii. 333.

and especially of its Chief, is also a stern satire upon the political blindness and corruption of the English court and parliament—a condition of things out of which, according to this poet, it was possible for so foolish and fatal a project to be born, as that of exterminating the germs of a manly political life in America.

At the time of the outbreak of the war, there was living in England, as chaplain to the Roman Catholics in the city of Worcester, an American priest, Charles Henry Wharton, —a man of singular strength and purity of character, and of quite extraordinary mental gifts,—who, notwithstanding his long absence from his native land, had never been able to lay aside his love for her, or his concern that she should be able, when her great trouble came, to beat back, with victory and honor, the blows of her enemies. He was of an old Roman Catholic family in Maryland, long settled at Notley Hall, where he was born in 1748. When but twelve years of age, he had been sent abroad to the Jesuit College at St. Omers. Not many years afterward, on the expulsion of the Jesuits from France, he had been removed with his college to Bruges, where he completed his undergraduate studies, rising to eminence both as a classicist and as a mathematician. Having afterward studied at the Jesuit College at Liège, and having there received priest's orders, he was in 1773 admitted into its faculty as professor of mathematics. This position he seems not to have retained very long,—leaving it, apparently, in order to serve in spiritual offices a congregation of his own faith in England.

Living thus in an English community, in the midst of the wrath and clangor attendant on the war then in progress against his own kinsmen and countrymen in America, he could only watch afar off the bitter unfolding of events, himself quite powerless to shape or steer them by any physical intervention of his own. Through all the bewilderments of the scene, his eye seems to have fixed itself in admiration and trust upon the person of Washington. Accordingly, in 1778,—the very year in which an American

cabal had been in progress for Washington's overthrow,—this sturdy priest gave utterance to the thought that was within him touching the whole situation, in "A Poetical Epistle to George Washington, Esquire, Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the United States of America," published first in America, and subsequently in England,—in the latter case, after receiving the friendly revision of Sir William Jones.[1] It may help us to realize to how great an extent English society always refused its sanction to the king's war against their American brethren, to note that this poem was published in London, in 1780, under the express sanction of the Duchess of Devonshire,[2] and that fifteen thousand copies of it were sold there in about three weeks at two shillings and sixpence each—the money being intended for the relief of the American prisoners of war.[3]

The full note of confidence in Washington which breathes through these verses, is nowhere weakened by any gush of panegyric. The poem is at once a manly tribute to the character and ability of the American leader, a satire on the corruption and folly of the ministerial party in England, and a magnanimous lesson in civic virtue addressed to the poet's own fellow-countrymen in their great movement toward nationality. Of course, having the conventionalized diction of eighteenth-century satire, it comes to us in a metrical garb which now suggests unreality—humdrum thought and manufactured emotion. Nevertheless, there is in this poem a genuineness that is not to be smoth-

[1] Wharton's "Remains," i. Appendix xxiv. [2] Ibid.

[3] This fact is mentioned in the Providence edition of the poem. The editor of Wharton's "Remains" states that the poem was first printed by Bradford in Philadelphia, in 1778. I have been unable to find any trace of such publication. I have, however, met with three early copies of the poem, as follows:—(1) a London edition bearing the date of 1780, and professing to be a reprint of an American edition published at Annapolis in 1779; (2) an edition published in Philadelphia in 1781, and professing to be a reprint of a London edition; (3) an edition published in Providence in 1781, and professing to be a reprint of a London edition. The poem was certainly in manuscript in the year 1778; but I am inclined to think that Annapolis and the year 1779 are the true place and time of its original publication.

ered even by such an envelopment—the sincerity and robustness of a clear, fearless and forthright thinker. The poem, which begins in the usual fashion of satire,—gibing at follies and wrongs that surround the poet and provoke his anger,—quickly leads on to a sudden turn in the thought, involving a bit of restrained but very impressive homage to the noble person to whom it is directed:

> "While many a servile Muse her succor lends
> To flatter tyrants, or a tyrant's friends;
> While thousands, slaughtered at Ambition's shrine,
> Are made a plea to court the tuneful Nine;
> Whilst Whitehead[1] lifts his hero to the skies,
> Foretells his conquests twice a year—and lies,
> Damns half-starved rebels to eternal shame,
> Or paints them trembling at Britannia's name;
> Permit an humble bard, great Chief, to raise
> One truth-erected trophy to thy praise.
> No abject flattery shall these numbers seek,
> To raise a blush on Virtue's modest cheek;
> Rehearse no merit, no illustrious deed,
> But foes must own—and Washington may read."[2]

After portraying the political corruption then prevalent in England, and the folly of the ministry in too long disregarding the claims of the American colonists, he prays that his own country may be saved from a leadership so blind, arrogant, and ruinous as that from which England was then suffering; and he ends with a noble sketch of what he would have America become,—a sketch which it might still profit us to be somewhat better acquainted with:

> "Great without pomp, without ambition brave,
> Proud not to conquer fellow-men, but save;
> Friend to the wretched, foe to none but those
> Who plan their greatness on their brethren's woes;

[1] Poet laureate from 1757 to 1785. [2] "A Poetical Epistle," etc., 8.

Awed by no titles, faithless to no trust,
Free without faction, obstinately just;
Too rough for flattery, dreading e'en as death
The baneful influence of Corruption's breath;
Warmed by Religion's sacred genuine ray
That points to future bliss the unerring way;
Spurning as Hell grim Superstition's laws—
Too long a tyrant in the noblest cause;
The world's great mart, yet not by gold defiled;
To mercy prone, in justice ever mild—
Save to the man who saps great Freedom's roots;
And never cursed with Mansfields, Norths, and Butes!
Such be my country!—what her sons should be,
O, may they learn, great Washington, from thee!" [1]

III.

"It is very odd," says Francis Lieber, "that the Anglican race hardly ever produces songs with life and soul, when the life of the nation throbs high. We produced no Revolutionary song worth talking of." [2] To the general purpose of this statement one may safely assent, but with the added remark that several of the Revolutionary songs that have been the most talked of, have been perhaps among the least worthy of it,—that is, not only are they lacking in "life and soul," but they belong to the pompous, rhetorical and truly ligneous variety of the article in question. Such, for example, is John Dickinson's much belauded "Liberty Song," [3] produced in 1768; such, also, is "The American Hearts of Oak," [4] by the Virginian, Hewlings, produced in 1775; and such is Jonathan Mitchell Sewall's song "On Independence," [5] produced in 1776. On the other hand,

[1] "An Epistle," etc., 14–15. In 1881 was published in Boston an edition of this poem "From the Original MS. belonging to David Pulsifer, A.M."

[2] Perry, "Life and Letters of Francis Lieber," 277.

[3] F. Moore, "Songs and Ballads," etc., 36–39.

[4] Ibid. 103–105. [5] Ibid. 144–146.

while these songs have had among us, for a hundred years and more, a sort of conventionalized and dutiful celebrity, it would not be difficult to shew that we inherit from the Revolution several others which since then have scarcely been talked of at all, but which certainly have something of the sparkle and dash of true popular lyrics, born too of a time when the life of the nation throbbed high. Such a song, for example, is one produced in 1775, to the Scottish tune—"I winna marry ony lad but Sandy o'er the lea," and entitled "The Pennsylvania Song," of which the first stanza runs as follows:

"We are the troop that ne'er will stoop
To wretched slavery,
Nor shall our seed by our base deed
Despisèd vassals be!
Freedom we will bequeathe to them,
Or we will bravely die;
Our greatest foe ere long shall know
How much did Sandwich lie,
And all the world shall know,
Americans are free;
Nor slaves nor cowards we will prove—
Great Britain soon shall see."[1]

Such a song, also, is one entitled "Independence," produced in the spring of 1776, and beginning thus:

"Freemen! if you pant for glory,
If you sigh to live in story,
If you burn with patriot zeal,
Seize this bright auspicious hour;
Chase those venal tools of power,
Who subvert the public weal."[2]

Such a song is one produced in 1778, in praise of the courage and devotion of the patriotic women of the Revolution,

[1] The entire song is in F. Moore, "Songs and Ballads," etc., 90–91.
[2] Ibid. 139–140.

and entitled "The Old Man's Song," of which these stanzas are a part:

"Boy, fill me a bumper! as long as I live,
The patriot fair for my toast must I give:
Here's a health to the sex of every degree—
Where sweetness and beauty with firmness agree.

"No more will I babble of times that are past,
My wish is, the present forever may last;
Already I see sulky George in despair—
Should he vanquish the men—to vanquish the fair!

"Of Greeks and of Romans enough has been said,
To Codrus and Brutus full tribute been paid:
O'er musty old heroes no longer I 'll dream—
Living beauty and virtue enliven my theme.

"Fill a bumper again, boy, and let it go round,
For the waters of youth in claret are found;
The younkers shall know, I 've the courage to dare
Drink as deep as the best to the patriot fair." [1]

Such a song, finally, is one produced in 1780, and entitled "The Volunteer Boys," of which the first two stanzas and the last are as follows:—

"Hence with the lover who sighs o'er his wine,
Cloes and Phillises toasting,
Hence with the slave who will whimper and whine,
Of ardor and constancy boasting.
Hence with love's joys,
Follies and noise,—
The toast that I give is the Volunteer Boys.

"Nobles and beauties and such common toasts,
Those who admire may drink, sir;
Fill up the glass to the Volunteer Hosts,
Who never from danger will shrink, sir.

[1] F. Moore, "Songs and Ballads," etc., 206–207.

Let mirth appear,
Every heart cheer,
The toast that I give is—the Brave Volunteer.

"Thus, the bold bands for old Jersey's defence,
The Muse hath with rapture reviewed, sir;
With our Volunteer Boys, as our verses commence,
With our Volunteer Boys they conclude, sir.
Discord or noise,
Ne'er damp our joys,
But health and success to the Volunteer Boys."[1]

IV.

Respecting this large group of compositions—the political and military songs of the Revolution—the writers of the most of them still enjoy the blessing of being unknown,—a blessing in which they are not to be disturbed by any efforts of ours. Benjamin Young Prime, a physician who had some proclivity to verse-writing, and who in 1764 wrote "The Patriot Muse,"[2] is said to have produced in the course of the Revolution several political songs which enjoyed a sort of vogue in their day. Of James McClurg, also a physician, a classmate and friend of Jefferson's, there is a tradition which certifies to his skill in the writing of neat and tripping society-verses, and of clever songs for the Revolutionary cause.[3] Rednap Howell, who was a school-master in North Carolina, and who, in 1771, published a series of caustic articles upon the political controversies then raging within

[1] The whole song is in F. Moore, "Songs and Ballads," etc., 285–288.

[2] I have not met with this poem.

[3] Some impression of him, perhaps, may be formed, from a sprightly little poem called "The Belles of Williamsburg," which is said to have been the joint work of McClurg and of St. George Tucker in the year 1777, and which, by a pardonable anachronism, John Esten Cooke has contrived to weave into his chapter on "Governor Fauquier's Ball," in "The Virginia Comedians," ii. 266–269.

that colony,[1] is to be mentioned also as a writer of patriotic songs. In Connecticut, likewise, was a coterie of poets, Oliver Arnold,[2] David Humphreys, Joel Barlow,[3] and Timothy Dwight,[4] who are said to have shewn their sympathy for the Revolution by the production of many war-songs—all of which, apparently, their country has quite willingly permitted to die. Only one of these war-songs, that of "Columbia," written by Dwight while acting as chaplain to the American army in the campaign against Burgoyne, seems to have lived beyond the occasion from which it sprang; and very likely, to those who now read Dwight's "Columbia" as a detached text, and who do not re-create for themselves the very scene, the atmosphere, the needs, the moods, from the midst of which this song came into life, it will be but ponderous and humdrum verse. Of course, wingëd words these are not, and were not; and yet so true was this song to the very heart of its time, that, high above the hail and smoke and curses of the battle-field, it really lifted the hearts of men who were just then overburdened by a dreadful task, who were bewildered in the dust and cries of the fighting, and begrimed with its soilure and blood; and it actually gave to them, for some great moments, a clear vision of the triumphant issue of all this havoc and horror,—home, country, a new fatherland in the world, which should erect its power and renown, not on the antique vulgarities of slaughter and conquest, but on the happiness of men,—on liberty, justice, opportunity, science, beauty, genius:

> "A world is thy realm; for a world be thy laws,
> Enlarged as thy empire, and just as thy cause."

Therefore, with this splendid vision before him, the singer, wandering alone from his camp into a forest of cedars and

[1] "A Fan for Fanning and a Touchstone to Tryon. By Regulus." Reprinted in the "North Carolina Magazine," for Feb. and March, 1859.

[2] F. Moore, "Songs and Ballads," 82; 379. [3] C. B. Todd, "Life of Barlow," 29–30 n. [4] "Memoir," in Dwight's "Theology," i. 13.

there trying to find some lofty cheer for others, finds it also for himself:

"Thus, as down a lone valley, with cedars o'erspread,
From war's dread confusion I pensively strayed—
The gloom from the face of fair heaven retired,
The winds ceased to murmur, the thunders expired;
Perfumes as of Eden, flowed sweetly along,
And a voice, as of angels, enchantingly sung,—
'Columbia, Columbia, to glory arise,
The queen of the world, and the child of the skies.'"[1]

V.

When the news of Bunker Hill fight, speeding southward, reached the town of Norwich, in Connecticut, it found there in Nathaniel Niles a soul prepared to receive it and whatsoever it forboded, with the fearlessness which comes of faith in things not to be won or lost in such warfare. This man, who was born in Rhode Island in 1741, who was graduated at Princeton in 1766, and who died in Vermont in 1828, was an instance of that versatility which seems to be the fatal privilege, as it is the badge, of civilization in its pioneer stages. Of towering intellect and commanding moral force, he laid his hand, during his long life, on nearly all of the great occupations which draw to themselves the service of educated men,—pedagogy, philosophy, medicine, law, divinity, mechanical invention, agriculture, politics, legislation, magistracy. Though without ordination as a minister in the religious body to which he belonged, he preached not infrequently in its pulpits; and on several occasions he published religious discourses which made their impression upon the public. All his life, too, his mind was busy with the current affairs of this world, partic-

[1] The whole song is in "American Poems," 62–64. These sentences concerning Dwight's "Columbia," are transferred with some alterations from a little book of mine entitled, "Three Men of Letters," 82–84.

ularly those of his own country,—on which he wrote and spoke as became a philosopher and a patriot.

This man it was who, being at his home in Norwich as the heart-shaking tidings from Bunker Hill rolled that way, and being prompted thereby to commune with those high thoughts which have in all times ministered strength and serenity in the midst of turmoil and pain, poured out his soul in a poem of sedate and touching melody,—"The American Hero,—A Sapphic Ode,"—which was straightway set to music and was sung everywhere in the churches, and proved itself to be a true lyric of fortitude and peace through all those troubled years:

"Why should vain mortals tremble at the sight of
Death and destruction in the field of battle,
Where blood and carnage clothe the field in crimson,
Sounding with death-groans?

"Death will invade us by the means appointed;
And we must all bow to the king of terrors;
Nor am I anxious, if I am preparëd,
What shape he comes in.

"Infinite wisdom teacheth us submission;
Bids us be quiet under all His dealings;
Never repining, but forever praising
God our Creator.

"Well may we praise Him: all His ways are perfect,
Though a resplendence infinitely glowing
Much hides the glory from the sight of mortals,
Struck blind by lustre.

"Good is Jehovah in bestowing sunshine;
Nor less his goodness in the storm and thunder:
Mercies and judgments both proceed from kindness—
Infinite kindness!

"Oh then exult that God forever reigneth!
Clouds that around Him hinder our perception,
Bind us the stronger to exalt His name and
Shout louder praises!

"Then to the goodness of my Lord and Master,
I will commit all that I have or wish for:
Sweetly as babes sleep, will I give my life up
When called to yield it.

"Now, War, I dare thee, clad in smoky pillars,
Bursting from bombshells, roaring from the cannon,
Rattling in grapeshot, like a storm of hailstones,
Torturing ether!

"To the bleak heavens let the spreading flame rise,
Bursting like Etna through the smoky columns,
Lowering like Egypt o'er the burning city—
Wantonly ruined.

"While all their hearts quick palpitate for havoc,
Let slip your bloodhounds, named the British lions,
Dauntless as death-stares, nimble as the whirlwind,
Dreadful as demons!

"Let ocean waft on all your floating castles,
Fraught with combustion horrible to nature;
Then, with your sails filled by a storm of vengeance,
Bear down to battle.

"From the dire caverns made by ghostly miners,
Let the explosion, dreadful as volcanoes,
Heave the broad town, with all its wealth and people,
Quick to destruction.

"Still shall the banner of the King of Heaven
Never advance where I 'm afraid to follow:
While that precedes me, with an open bosom,
Mars, I defy thee!

"Fame and dear Freedom lure me on to battle;
While a fell despot, grimmer than a death's head,
Stings me with serpents fiercer than Medusa's,
To the encounter.

"Life for my country and the cause of freedom,
Is but a cheap price for a worm to part with:
And if preservëd in so great a conflict contest,
Life is redoubled."[1]

VI.

The year 1776 opened with most solemn portents for Americans, for Englishmen, for mankind. The word Independence, held back so long, so long repudiated as a word hateful and calamitous, had been flung at last into the controversy, and was thenceforward to be spoken by many lips white with dread or tremulous with desire. No man could foresee what was coming upon the earth: all men could foresee that something was coming which the earth itself had not seen before. Thus, while in those early months of 1776, the people of this land were doubting or affirming, were cursing, weeping, fighting, or fleeing from the fight, one man, whose name we know not, set down upon paper, and sent forth in print, a few lines of verse which, perhaps, would long ago have become celebrated in literature had they been uttered anywhere else than among ourselves, and which, at any rate, may convince us that in the midst of all that hurly-burly were men and women who knew how, alway, through all confusions, right guidance lies in the path of high principle and especially of trust in the Unseen Leader. These lines, thus written and printed, frame themselves into a prayer, laconic, austere, devout; they are a stately and sweet poem, fit to be placed by the side of

[1] This poem, as commonly published, has been altered in many particulars from the original, and in most cases for the worse. My copy is taken with exactness from the original manuscript, which was courteously sent to me by Nathaniel Niles, of New York, a grandson of the writer, whose name he bears.

any other of its kind that can be met with anywhere in the many-mansioned treasure-house of our English speech:

"The American Patriot's Prayer."

"Parent of all, omnipotent
In heaven, and earth below,
Through all creation's bounds unspent,
Whose streams of goodness flow,

"Teach me to know from whence I rose,
And unto what designed;
No private aims let me propose,
Since link'd with human kind.

"But chief to hear my country's voice,
May all my thoughts incline;
'T is reason's law, 't is virtue's choice,
'T is nature's call and Thine.

"Me from fair Freedom's sacred cause
Let nothing e'er divide;
Grandeur, nor gold, nor vain applause,
Nor friendship false, misguide.

"Let me not faction's partial hate
Pursue to this land's woe;
Nor grasp the thunder of the state
To wound a private foe.

"If, for the right to wish the wrong
My country shall combine,
Single to serve th' erroneous throng,
Spite of themselves, be mine."[1]

[1] This remarkable poem first appeared, so far as I am able to discover, in the "Large Additions to Common Sense," appended to the third edition of that pamphlet as published by Robert Bell, in Philadelphia, February, 1776. Thomas Paine's latest and best biographer (M. D. Conway, i. 116) seems to have been led by this fact to ascribe the poem to his hero. In that opinion I

VII.

A noble specimen of the religious songs that were actually sung by the armies of the Revolution, remains to us in "The American Soldier's Hymn," a composition not unworthy to be placed by the side of Luther's "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott," a composition in the manner of the great hymn-writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,—simple, earnest, reverent, stately, with the deep note of heroic trust in the help of the Eternal Helper:

"'T is God that girds our armor on,
And all our just designs fulfills;
Through Him our feet can swiftly run,
And nimbly climb the steepest hills.

"Lessons of war from Him we take,
And manly weapons learn to wield;
Strong bows of steel with ease we break,
Forced by our stronger arms to yield.

"'T is God that still supports our right,
His just revenge our foes pursues;
'T is He that with resistless might,
Fierce nations to His power subdues.

"Our universal safeguard He!
From Whom our lasting honors flow;
He made us great, and set us free
From our remorseless bloody foe.

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am unable to concur. Of course, the first appearance of the poem in the addenda to "Common Sense" does not at all prove that it was written by the author of that pamphlet; since Paine wrote but few, if any, of that miscellaneous collection of pieces. When one turns to the test of internal evidence, it seems to me difficult to conclude that this poem bears the characteristic marks of Paine's work. I do not recall anything, known to have been written by him, which, whatever its merit, is not somewhere marred by at least a touch of disproportion, of excess, of pungency verging towards truculence, and of a willingness to surrender his uncommon gift of expression to mere smartness of phrase; whereas this poem is characterized throughout by spiritual ripeness, by self-restraint, and by an entire freedom from any trace either of rancor or of rhetorical glitter.

"Therefore to celebrate His fame,
Our grateful voice to Heaven we 'll raise;
And nations, strangers to His name,
Shall thus be taught to sing His praise."[1]

VIII.

Crossing the somewhat indistinct line between the song and the ballad, we find that there were produced during the Revolution a great number of those blunt and artless compositions, intended either to be sung or to be recited, wherein the more picturesque and stirring incidents of the war are told with the undisguised emotion, and in the homely diction and loose measure made dear to so many generations of our race in the old ballads of England and Scotland. It is doubtful if the American ballads which sprang into life on either side of our Revolutionary controversy, will be found to differ materially, either in quality or in form, from such products of popular feeling as have been thrown forth, in similar times of commotion, upon the highways and byways of the mother country. At any rate, among the most characteristic of these American ballads, on the Revolutionist side of the controversy, should be mentioned one of considerable sprightliness and imaginative vigor, entitled "Liberty's Call," said to have been written in 1775, and beginning with these lines:

"High on the banks of Delaware,
Fair Liberty she stood,
And waving with her lovely hand,
Cried, 'Still, thou roaring flood!'"[2]

[1] I use the copy given by F. Moore in his "Ballad History of the American Revolution," 221–222, and taken by him from a manuscript found among the papers of General George Clinton.

[2] First printed in "The Pennsylvania Packet" in 1775, it enjoyed great popularity during the Revolution; was attributed to several different writers, notably to Francis Hopkinson; but was probably the work of John Mason, an eccentric tradesman of Philadelphia. F. Moore, "Songs and Ballads," 83–87.

Nor should we forget "A Song for the Red Coats," which tells, with the true ballad-ring, the never-to-be-exhausted story of the successful campaign against Burgoyne in the summer and autumn of 1777:

"Come unto me, ye heroes,
Whose hearts are true and bold,
Who value more your honor,
Than others do their gold!
Give ear unto my story,
And I the truth will tell,
Concerning many a soldier
Who for his country fell."[1]

Upon the same prolific theme is the ballad of "The Fate of John Burgoyne," written likewise in 1777, and in its opening lines depicting the merry scene of this hero's departure from London for the conquest of America:

"When Jack, the king's commander,
Was going to his duty,
Through all the crowd he smiled and bowed—
To every blooming beauty;
The city rung with feats he 'd done
In Portugal and Flanders,
And all the town thought he 'd be crowned
The first of Alexanders."[2]

For the thrilling story of the capture and fate of Major John André, a very genuine thing, self-styled a "ditty," is "Brave Paulding and the Spy," wherein the shrewdness and incorruptible integrity of Paulding are celebrated with a fervor which yet admits of downright admiration and sympathy for the unfortunate young officer whom Paulding

[1] F. Moore, "Songs and Ballads," 176–184.

[2] Ibid., 185. Much of the contemporary verse evoked by our victory over Burgoyne is doleful rubbish, such as a "Short Review of Burgoyne's Expedition," by Robert Dinsmore, the "rustic bard," and all the metrical stuff written by the Reverend Wheeler Case.

had to bring to his death. Thus, in singing of André upon the gallows—an enemy and a spy—this homely ballad has a robust compassion and an unshrinking honesty of praise to be expected only in an utterance so fearless as a genuine street-song:

"When he was executed,
He looked both meek and mild;
He looked upon the people,
And pleasantly he smiled.
It moved each eye with pity,
Caused every heart to bleed;
And every one wished him released—
And Arnold in his stead.
He was a man of honor,
In Britain he was born;
To die upon the gallows
Most highly he did scorn."[1]

The almost matchless victory of the rebels, achieved in 1780 on a rugged height near the northern border of South Carolina, has claimed popular commemoration ever since in a hundred forms,—in none of them more genuine than in a ballad published in 1781 and called "Battle of King's Mountain,"—a ballad which begins with this bit of charmingly outspoken vituperation:

"'T was on a pleasant mountain
The Tory heathens lay,—
With a doughty major at their head,
One Ferguson they say.
Cornwallis had detached him,
A thieving for to go,
And catch the Carolina men,
Or bring the rebels low."[2]

It may be worth while for us also to take note of two other fighting ballads, one with the flavor of the land and

[1] F. Moore, "Songs and Ballads," etc., 320–321. [2] Ibid. 335.

one with the flavor of the sea, namely, "The Wyoming Massacre," written by Uriah Terry,[1] and "Bold Hawthorne, or, The Cruise of the 'Fair American'"[2]: both of them crude enough in form, but both breathing the very breath of the life of those strong and passionate days.

IX.

Four years before the tragical adventure of André had drawn toward him the tenderness of millions of hearts on both sides of the Atlantic, a fate not unlike his, though without its immediate compensations in sympathy and glory, had befallen Nathan Hale, a most gallant and accomplished young American, of a character stronger and more original, probably, than André's, and certainly not less noble. A graduate of Yale College in 1773, a schoolteacher at New London, and a candidate for the ministry, the tidings from Lexington and Concord had turned him into a soldier; and by the early autumn of 1776, he had risen to be captain of a company in the "Connecticut Rangers," forming a part of the army under the immediate command of Washington in the neighborhood of New York. In response to an earnest appeal from Washington, he consented to go in disguise within the enemy's lines for the purpose of procuring information greatly needed by the commander-in-chief: in short, he took upon himself, in the name of duty to his country, the ignominy and the peril of becoming a spy. In that service he was caught, was carried before General Howe, was hurriedly tried and condemned, and was hurriedly executed,—having been refused by the provost-marshal the attendance of a chaplain or the use of a Bible, and having suffered the added cruelty of seeing his letters of farewell to his sisters and to his betrothed torn in pieces before his face. The story of this young fellow's fearless devotion and death, has not

[1] Charles Miner, "History of Wyoming," Appendix.

[2] McCarty's "National Songs," ii. 250.

been suffered to die or to grow dim among us. Poems have been written about him.[1] Statues have been reared to him. Anniversaries have been kept in his honor. Moreover, in the very year of his self-immolation, his fate was sung in a ballad which for poetic quality—for weird pathos, for a strange sweet melody—probably deserves to be placed at the head of this entire class of writings as produced during the period of the Revolution.

Landing from his little boat upon a lonely spot within the enemy's lines, Hale had openly gone about in the disguise of a Loyalist school-master; he had visited the various British camps on Long Island and in New York; but having, according to one account, been recognized by an unrelenting kinsman who was a real Loyalist, he was tracked and captured just as he was in the act of making his escape by the way he had come. It is at this stage of the story that the ballad begins:

"The breezes went steadily through the tall pines,
A saying 'oh! hu-ush!' a saying 'oh! hu-ush!'
As stilly stole by a bold legion of horse,
For Hale in the bush, for Hale in the bush.

"'Keep still!' said the thrush as she nestled her young,
In a nest by the road, in a nest by the road;
'For the tyrants are near, and with them appear
What bodes us no good, what bodes us no good.'

"The brave captain heard it, and thought of his home
In a cot by the brook, in a cot by the brook,
With mother and sister and memories dear
He so gaily forsook, he so gaily forsook.

"Cooling shades of the night were coming apace,
The tattoo had beat, the tattoo had beat;

[1] No other verse inspired by the story of Nathan Hale is, in my opinion, equal to a lyric by Francis Miles Finch, beginning,—

"To drum-beat, and heart-beat,
A soldier marches by."

The noble one sprang from his dark lurking place,
To make his retreat, to make his retreat.

" He warily trod on the dry rustling leaves,
As he passed through the wood, as he passed through the wood ;
And silently gained his rude launch on the shore,
As she played with the flood, as she played with the flood.

" The guards of the camp on that dark dreary night,
Had a murderous will, had a murderous will ;
They took him and bore him afar from the shore,
To a hut on the hill, to a hut on the hill.

" No mother was there, nor a friend who could cheer,
In that little stone cell, in that little stone cell ;
But he trusted in love from his Father above—
In his heart all was well, in his heart all was well.

" An ominous owl with his solemn bass voice,
Sat moaning hard by, sat moaning hard by :—
' The tyrant's proud minions most gladly rejoice,
For he must soon die, for he must soon die.'

. . . . . .

" They took him and bound him and bore him away,
Down the hill's grassy side, down the hill's grassy side :
'T was there the base hirelings, in royal array,
His cause did deride, his cause did deride.

" Five minutes were given, short moments, no more,
For him to repent, for him to repent ;
He prayed for his mother—he asked not another—
To Heaven he went, to Heaven he went.

" The faith of a martyr the tragedy shewed,
As he trod the last stage, as he trod the last stage ;
And Britons will shudder at gallant Hale's blood,
As his words do presage, as his words do presage :—

"'Thou pale king of terrors, thou life's gloomy foe,
Go frighten the slave, go frighten the slave;
Tell tyrants, to you their allegiance they owe—
No fears for the brave, no fears for the brave!'"[1]

[1] F. Moore, "Songs and Ballads," 130–133.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE DRAMATIC LITERATURE OF THE REVOLUTION.

I.—The beginnings of our dramatic literature—These writings exceed all others in the frankness and realism with which they exhibit the ideas and passions of the period.

II.—The tragedy of "Ponteach, or the Savages of America," by Major Robert Rogers, 1766—The author's acquaintance with the American Indians and their wrongs—Method of this tragedy—Outline of its plot—Estimate of the work—Fails in the presentation of real savages.

III.—"Disenchantment, or, The Force of Credulity," a comic opera, by Andrew Barton, 1767.

IV.—A Loyalist colloquy, "The Americans Roused, in a Cure for the Spleen," by Jonathan Sewall, 1774.

V.—Two political satires in dramatic form by Mercy Otis Warren—"The Adulateur, a Tragedy, as it is now Acted in Upper Servia," 1773—Exhibits historical situations in New England from 1770 to 1773—Also, the prevailing fear and hatred of Governor Hutchinson—"The Group," a metrical play in two Acts, 1775—Satirizes the British and Loyalist leaders in Boston just prior to the military stage of the conflict—Her two elaborate tragedies in blank verse, "The Sack of Rome," and "The Ladies of Castile."

VI.—An American Chronicle Play, early in 1776, on "The Fall of British Tyranny, or, American Liberty Triumphant. The First Campaign. A Tragi-Comedy of Five Acts, as lately planned at the Royal Theatrum Pandemonium at St. James"—A jocular and rough Whig satire—Its chief personages—Represents the British attack on American rights as originating in the ambition of Lord Bute—Various scenes in the play—Satire on Lord Dunmore, and the British generals in America—The Epilogue alludes to "Common Sense," and avows its doctrine.

VII.—The evacuation of Boston by the British in March, 1776, celebrated in the American army by a farce entitled "The Blockheads," in reply to Burgoyne's recent farce entitled "The Blockade."

VIII.—"The Battle of Brooklyn," a Loyalist farce just after the American defeat on Long Island, August, 1776—Satirizes the American leaders as vulgar adventurers, and reflects some of the coarse personal scandals of the time.

IX.—The high literary merit of two dramatic poems by Hugh Henry Brackenridge, both dealing with military events in the first year of the war—"The

Battle of Bunker's Hill"—The motive of this drama, in the moral superiority of the American cause compared with that of the enemy—Outline of the poem.

X.—Brackenridge's second dramatic poem, "The Death of General Montgomery at the Siege of Quebec"—Its purpose, to stimulate American military ardor by stimulating American hatred of the British—Outline of the poem.

XI.—Jonathan Mitchell Sewall's "Epilogue to Addison's Tragedy of Cato," 1778.

XII.—"The Motley Assembly, a Farce," 1779, a satire on a fashionable clique in Boston accustomed to sneer at the Revolution, to denounce the French allies, and to regret the good old days of the British occupation.

XIII.—"The Blockheads, or, Fortunate Contractor, an Opera, in Two Acts," 1782, a satire on the French Alliance.

I.

TENTATIVE and crude as are nearly all of the writings in dramatic form, which were produced among us during the period of the Revolution, they are not unworthy of some slight attention, in the first place, as giving the genesis of a department of American literature now become considerable; but, chiefly, as reproducing the ideas, the passions, the motives, and the moods of that stormful time in our history, with a frankness, a liveliness, and an unshrinking realism not approached by any other species of Revolutionary literature.

II.

A very early and also a very notable example of dramatic writing in our literature, is "Ponteach, or, The Savages of America: a Tragedy," published in London in 1766, and believed to have been the work of Major Robert Rogers, an American officer in the service of England during her last great war with the French and Indians in America.[1] Written, therefore, by a man who knew the Indians in some other manner than by hearsay or through a haze of idealizing sentiment—whose acquaintance with them, in fact, was of that intimate and authentic kind which is to be had by

[1] Robert Rogers is also dealt with in Chapter vii. of the present work.

living among them and fighting with them and of course occasionally killing them—this drama nevertheless exhibits the red men of the American forests as, upon the whole, more courteous and more generous, as honester, as nobler, than the white men who, in the capacity of traders, hunters, or warriors, had invaded those forests in order to transact business with them. According to Major Rogers,—veteran bush-whacker, forest-ranger, and skull-cracker to his majesty among the American Indians,—it was they who, in all communications with the white men were usually lied to and insulted, in all bargains usually cheated, in the beginning of all quarrels usually the party suffering injury.

The tragedy of "Ponteach" is built out into Five Acts, after the conventional pattern for structures of this kind; it is, also, in blank verse, with occasional accesses of rhyme. Its tragic culmination springs from two sets of enormities—on the one hand, those of the English against the Indians, on the other, those of the Indians against one another; and it is reached along two lines of retributive fulfillment, often entangled together, yet always easily discriminated.

The First Act brings forward the first set of crimes—those of rapacity, treachery, and cruelty practised upon Indians by white men. Thus, in the opening Scene, two traders commune together over their plans for sundry large and profitable frauds upon their unsophisticated customers —exulting in all this as one might exult in something altogether laudable. In the Second Scene, a hunter named Honeyman, proposes to another hunter, named Osbourn, the jolly plan of enriching themselves without much trouble, by shooting down such straggling Indians as they might chance to fall in with—especially if found to be carrying furs to market. Honeyman's proposal leads to the following colloquy:

"*Osbourn.* Trust me for that—I 'll join with all my heart;
Nor with a nicer aim or steadier hand
Would shoot a tiger than I would an Indian.

There is a couple !—stalking now this way,
With lusty packs ! Heaven favor our design !

Honeyman. Silence ! conceal yourself, and mind your eye !

Osbourn. Are you well charged ?

Honeyman. I am. Take you the nearest,
And mind to fire exactly when I do.

Osbourn. A charming chance !

Honeyman. Hush ! let them still come nearer."

As soon as these Indians, unconscious of danger, have come somewhat nearer, the hunters shoot; then Honeyman cries out—

" They 're down, old boy, a brace of noble bucks ! "—

whereupon these two Christian gentlemen rush forward and strip their pagan victims of the rich load of furs they had with them.[1]

In the Third Scene, two officers of the English army wantonly insult the great Ottawa chieftain, Ponteach; and to his face they tell him of their expectation soon to have the pleasure of slaughtering his people, and of laying the fire-brand to their wigwams and their corn-fields.

In the Fourth Scene, we are permitted to witness a conference between three provincial governors, who arrive at the friendly agreement to rob the Indians of the money and other gifts which the king had sent out for them, and at the same time, in order to shew their impartiality, to rob the king, also, of the presents which Ponteach had entrusted to these noble governors for his royal brother in England.

This closes the First Act. In the Second Act, the Indian portion of the plot has its beginning,—in the perception by the Indians that they must have war with the English; in the plans of Ponteach for conducting such war; in the fatal rivalry, both in love and in ambition, between his two sons, Chekitan and Philip.

[1] " Ponteach, or The Savages of America," 9–10.

From these several causes, then, issue the events which follow in the tragedy, wherein we have an abundance of intrigue, violence, hate, love, lust, superstition, oratory, ceremony, state-craft, torture, assassination, suicide. At last, when so many of those whom he loved or cared for are weltering in their blood, and disasters overwhelm him on every hand, the hero of the tragedy stands out alone in all the grandeur of a great soul unconquered by misfortune, determined still to show to the gods an unbending purpose and a courage worthy even of themselves.

While the details of this plot are almost entirely without historical basis, the piece as a whole has a certain authenticity in its presentation of the genius and the daring of its celebrated hero, as well as of the wrongs inflicted on him and his people by the superior race then incontinently helping itself to their country. "The style of the drama is," in the opinion of Francis Parkman, "superior to the plot; and the writer displays at times no small insight into the workings of human nature."[1] On the other hand, it is hard to understand how a composition in which a man like Major Robert Rogers had a considerable share, could have escaped so perfectly as this drama has done, almost every note of the true Indian manner in thought or expression. In fact, nearly all the Indians to be met with in this play are rather cultivated persons. Even the filth and the profanity, which Parkman[2] complains of as being rather too pervasive of the talk of the white men whom we have here to listen to, are probably much truer to the life of which this drama professes to be a representation, than are those refinements of sentiment, those elaborations of conventional phrase, which the play puts into the mouths of such young savages as Chekitan, Torax, and Monelia. Indeed, of all the American Indians thus set upon the stage for us to look at and listen to, it must be said that if they are savages —as the title of this drama declares them to be—they are extremely artificial savages. As a professed delineation of

[1] "The Conspiracy of Pontiac," ii., 321. [2] Ibid. 332.

the life and thought and speech of Ottawas and Mohawks, the tragedy of "Ponteach" may be original—it can hardly claim to be aboriginal.[1]

III.

Sometime in the year 1767,—during that lull in political excitement which intervened between the repeal of the Stamp Act and the subsequent return of parliament to its policy of colonial taxation,—there was published in New York a play which is at least notable for its exemption from all the perplexities incident to affairs of state, being simply a frolicsome satire on a certain phase of character then too prominent in this part of the world, to wit, the greed and the credulity which bewitched so many men, and tempted them to spend life and fortune and hope itself in digging for treasures supposed to have been hidden in the earth by valiant pirates and other thrifty accumulators in a former time. This play bears the title of "Disenchantment; or, The Force of Credulity. A New American Comic Opera, of Three Acts. By Andrew Barton, Esquire";[2] and while the text is not at all brilliant, the drollery of some of the situations must have given to it no little effectiveness.[3]

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[1] In "The Conspiracy of Pontiac," i., 164 note, Parkman says of this tragedy of "Ponteach": "It is very rare; and besides the copy in my possession, I know of but one other, which may be found in the library of the British Museum." As some indication of the bibliographical treasures now accumulated in the public and private libraries of Providence, Rhode Island, and of the generous courtesy with which those treasures are made available to students, I may state that the only two copies of "Ponteach" which, after considerable enquiry, I have ever been able to see, are both in that city; one of them belonging to Mr. John Nicholas Brown, the other to the library of Brown University.

[2] Perhaps an assumed name for Col. Thomas Forrest of Germantown. Manuscript note on title-page of the old copy in Library Company of Philadelphia.

[3] Indeed, its personal allusions were so effective that "Douglas's Company," playing in Philadelphia in April, 1767, withdrew it after having put it in rehearsal. P. L. Ford, "Beginnings of Am. Dram. Lit.," 13–14.

IV.

One of the earliest and certainly one of the crudest experiments in the direction of dramatic writing, during this period, is a colloquy, published probably in the autumn of 1774, and entitled "The Americans Roused, in a Cure for the Spleen. Or, Amusement for a Winter's Evening: Being the Substance of a Conversation on the Times, over a Friendly Tankard and Pipe." This production, which was probably written by Jonathan Sewall of Massachusetts, won for itself considerable notoriety, not indeed for its wit or its literary charm, but for the unshrinking candor with which, under the shield of a dramatic irresponsibility, its author denounced the work of the first Continental Congress, and the entire movement in opposition to the British ministry.

V.

Two notable efforts at political satire in dramatic form were made in the years just preceding the outbreak of military violence, by "Madam Mercy Warren, the historical, philosophical, poetical, and satirical consort of . . . General James Warren of Plymouth."[1] Of these once celebrated performances, the first is "The Adulateur: a Tragedy, as it is now Acted in Upper Servia," wherein the streets, buildings and people of that far-off country do duty for the streets, buildings, and people of Boston; wherein Brutus, Cassius, Marcus, Portius and other patriotic and grandiloquent conspirators stand for James Otis, John Adams, Samuel Adams, Hancock, Warren and the rest; wherein Bagshot, as Aga of the Janizaries, enacts the bloodthirsty part then popularly attributed to Captain Preston of His Majesty's Twenty-Ninth Regiment of Infantry; wherein Rapatio, as Governor of Upper Servia, embodies the boundless and unscrupulous ambition, the

[1] John Adams, "Works," x. 99.

treachery, the ingenuity, the lust for blood, then supposed to characterize Thomas Hutchinson, His Majesty's Governor of Massachusetts Bay. The play is duly elaborated into Five Acts, chiefly in unrhymed pentameter verse. It exhibits a series of historical situations in New England, ranging from some imaginary moment prior to the Boston massacre in 1770, down to some time in 1773, when the very air is hot with conspiracy, revolution, and readiness for deeds of violence, and when the habit of the Revolutionary chiefs seems to have been to talk of American liberty in the grandiose fashion of Greek and Roman patriots. Another most veracious note of this play, is the profound suspicion of Governor Thomas Hutchinson which it everywhere intimates—the fear of him, the hate of him—as the colossal marplot and head-devil of British tyranny in America. For example, one of Hutchinson's creatures, named Gripeall, boasts to the governor how he means so to use his official authority over the Upper Servians as to

> . . . "cramp their trade till pale-eyed Poverty
> Haunts all their streets and frowns destruction on,
> While many a poor man, leaning on his staff,
> Beholds a numerous famished offspring round him,
> Who weep for bread. Gods, how his bosom heaves!
> Ghastly he rolls an aching eye upon them,
> Then blasts my name, and with a groan expires."

In response to this jubilant portrayal of public misery to be wrought by his own servant upon people whose only crime is insubmission to his despotism, the governor exclaims—

> "What throbs of joy! Nero, I tower above thee!"[1]

Mercy Warren's second and more effective experiment in political satire is her metrical play, called "The Group," published early in the year 1775, apparently before the day of Lexington and Concord. By that time, Hutchinson,

[1] "The Adulateur," 25.

the most dreaded of the Tory leaders, was in England, whither he had been summoned to make personal report to the king; but the malign character ascribed to him by his enemies is here well sustained by his brother, Foster Hutchinson, who appears in "The Group" under the name of Judge Meagre; and along with him are a dozen or more of the New England chiefs of the Loyalist party,—Peter Oliver as Lord Chief Justice Hazlerod, Timothy Ruggles as Brigadier Hateall, the foppish Daniel Leonard as Beau Trumps, Harrison Gray as Scriblerius Fribble, Sir William Pepperell as Sir Sparrow Spendall, Nathaniel Ray Thomas as Simple Sapling, Secretary Thomas Flucker as Dupe,[1] and so on. Moreover, these Tory chiefs, thus forming the "dramatis personæ" of the play, are "attended by a swarm of court sycophants, hungry harpies, and unprincipled danglers collected from the neighboring villages, hovering over the stage in the shape of locusts, led by Massachusettensis in the form of a basilisk; the rear brought up by Proteus, bearing a torch in one hand and a powder flask in the other; the whole supported by a mighty army and navy from Blunderland, for the laudable purpose of enslaving its best friends."[2]

The play has but two Acts. The scene of the first is laid in "a little back parlor," with "guards standing at the door"[3]; while in the second Act "the scene changes to a large dining room. The table furnished with bowls, bottles, glasses, and cards. The group appear sitting round in a restless attitude. In one corner of the room is discovered a small cabinet of books for the use of the studious and contemplative, containing Hobbes's Leviathan, Sipthrop's Sermons,[4] Hutchinson's History, Fable of the Bees, Phila-

[1] I here follow the identification of characters as given by Norton Quincy. J. Adams, "Works," x. 99 note. This assignment seems to have been satisfactory to Jared Sparks, who inserted it in his own copy of "The Group," now in the library of Cornell University. In one of the copies of the play belonging to the Boston Athenæum, I observed an assignment of characters somewhat different from the above. [2] "The Group," 2.

[3] Ibid. 3. [4] A gibe at the Reverend East Apthorp.

lethes on Philanthrop with an Appendix by Massachusettensis, Hoyle on Whist, Lives of the Stuarts, Statutes of Henry the Eighth and William the Conqueror, Wedderburn's Speeches, and Acts of Parliament for 1774." [1]

Within those two rooms, accordingly, the members of this Tory club have ample opportunity to exhibit, either for the derision or for the horror of their Whig fellow-countrymen, their half-hearted ambitions, their qualms of conscience, their guilty surmises of failure, their plots, disagreements, jealousies, fears, hopes, hatreds, and their sullen contempt for the rights and the sufferings of their fellow-countrymen. In the course of the play, there enter the Tory members of the colonial council who, "with trembling servile gestures," present to Sylla—that is, to General Gage—several petitions from their "Under-Tools in the distant counties, begging each a guard of myrmidons to protect them from the armed multitudes . . . approaching to take speedy vengeance" upon them; whereat Sylla, walking up and down the room "in great perplexity," discusses the whole miserable business with Hateall, Dupe, Meagre, Simple Sapling and others, confessing frankly his own sense of the nobility and strength of the cause against which he is ordered to make war, and his own deep reluctance to do anything to precipitate the bloody conflict which seems so near:

> "shall I rashly draw my guilty sword,
> And dip its hungry hilt in the rich blood
> Of the best subjects that a Brunswick boasts,
> And for no cause, but that they nobly scorn
> To wear the fetters of his venal slaves!" [2]

As Sylla then goes from the stage with such words of misgiving upon his lips, Hazlerod exclaims "in great agitation,"—

> "This balancing of passions ne'er will do,
> And by the scale which virtue holds to reason,

[1] "The Group," 7. [2] Ibid. 13–17.

Weighing the business ere he executes,—
Doubting, deliberating, half resolved
To be the savior of a virtuous state,—
Instead of guarding refugees and knaves,
The buzzing reptiles that crawl about his court,
And lick his hand for some delicious crumb.

. . . . . .

I' ll hasten after, and stir up his soul
To dire revenge and bloody resolutions,
Or the whole fabric falls on which we hang,
And down the pit of infamy we plunge,
Without the spoils we long have hoped to reap."[1]

Accordingly, as Hazlerod "crosses the stage hastily and goes after Sylla," Dupe and Meagre are left standing "at the further part of the stage"; and in the conversation which then takes place between them and which ends the play, Meagre proves by his honest avowal of the very highest sort of Toryism how worthy he is, at least according to the conception of the satirist, to be the brother of the greatest of Tories, Governor Hutchinson:

"Let not thy soft timidity of heart
Urge thee to terms, till the last stake is thrown.
'T is not my temper ever to forgive—
When once resentment 's kindled in my breast.
I hated Brutus[2] for his noble stand
Against the oppressors of his injured country.
I hate the leaders of these restless factions
For all their generous efforts to be free.
I curse the senate which defeats our bribes.

. . . . . .

I hate the people who, no longer gulled,
See through the schemes of our aspiring clan.

[1] "The Group," 17–18.

[2] The reference is probably to James Otis, brother of the satirist, then disqualified for further service on account of the brutal beating, and especially the sword-cut upon the head, which he received in 1769 from sundry revenue officers and others in a tavern.

And from the rancor of my venomed mind,
I look askance on all the human race ;
And if they 're not to be appalled by fear,
I wish the earth might drink that vital stream
That warms the heart and feeds the manly glow—
The love inherent, planted in the breast,
To equal liberty conferred on man
By Him who formed the peasant and the King.
Could we erase these notions from their minds,
. . . . . .
We 'd smoothly glide on midst a race of slaves,[1]
Nor heave one sigh—though all the human race
Were plunged in darkness, slavery, and vice."

Besides these two dramatic poems having direct relation to the controversies of the Revolution,[2] Mercy Warren wrote, " as the amusement of solitude, at a period when every active member of society was engaged, either in the field or the cabinet, to resist the strong hand of foreign domination,"[3] two carefully wrought historical plays, " The Sack of Rome," and " The Ladies of Castile," which, however, were not published till the year 1790.

VI.

Early in the year 1776—probably in the month of March[4] —there was published in Philadelphia a drama bearing this rather emotional title,—" The Fall of British Tyranny; or, American Liberty Triumphant. The First Campaign. A Tragi-Comedy of Five Acts, as lately planned at the Royal Theatrum Pandemonium at St. James'." This production may be roughly described as an American Chronicle

[1] " The Group," 20–21.

[2] The authorship of a farce called " The Blockheads," mentioned later in this chapter, is attributed to her.

[3] Warren, " Poems, Dramatic and Miscellaneous," Dedication, p. iii.

[4] From internal evidence, it must be inferred that the writing of the play was finished after the publication of " Common Sense" in January, 1776, and before

Play. Being in no respect embarrassed by attention to the dramatic unities, it shifts the scene with a truly sovereign facility from one side of the Atlantic to the other,—from England to Massachusetts, from Massachusetts to Virginia, from Virginia to Massachusetts, from Massachusetts to Canada, and from Canada back again to Massachusetts. As to the period of the action, it may be said to begin at that moment—quite impossible to ascertain—when in the ambitious and plotting soul of Lord Bute, was born, as is here assumed, the purpose to create a disastrous American crisis in order to precipitate a still more disastrous English crisis, amid the commotions of which George the Third should be driven to an abdication of the throne,—whereupon Bute's own kinsmen, the Stuarts, should come back and enjoy their own again. From that indefinable point of beginning, the action sweeps on and on, year after year, until it culminates in the first campaign of actual war in America, including the incidents at Lexington and Concord, the battle of Bunker Hill, Lord Dunmore's negro-stealing and house-burning raids along the Virginia coast, the American invasion of Canada, and especially the spectacle,—astonishing to gods and men—of a rabble of half-armed peasants shutting up the invincible army of Britain within the city of Boston, where they are saved from starvation only by great displays of valor on their part in the stealing of chickens, sheep, and pigs from the islands and shores of the harbor. The action comes to an end just before the British evacuation of Boston,—which occurred on the 17th of March, 1776.

Of course, for this huge and very Gothic drama, no claim of artistic merit need be supposed. Nevertheless, as a presentation of the spirit and method of Revolutionary thought when first confronted with the question of Independence,

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the news had reached Philadelphia of the evacuation of Boston, March 17, 1776. Sabin confidently attributes this play to John Leacock. ("Dictionary," etc., sub nom.) Hildeburn is more cautious, being content to remark that it is "said to have been written by Mr. Laycock of Philadelphia." ("Issues of the Press," etc., ii. 249.)

"The Fall of British Tyranny" is of the highest interest and value. It is simply a tremendous Whig satire, in dramatic form, first, on the one deep, treasonable motive attributed to the Tory conspirators who, in England and America, had forced the two countries into so monstrous a conflict; and, secondly, on the imbecility, the cowardice, and the grotesque failure thus far displayed by the military agents of these Tory conspirators in the execution of their horrid plot.

Even in the long list of the "dramatis personæ" of the play, one may catch something of its rough humor, and especially of its jocular indifference to the majesty of all great names in England below that of the king,—the latter being here spared contumelious mention except as a victim of the political profligacy of his own chief servants:

Lord Paramount, Mr. Bute.
Lord Mocklaw, Mr. Mansfield.
Lord Hypocrite, Mr. Dartmouth.
Lord Poltroon, Mr. Sandwich.
Lord Catspaw, Mr. North.
Lord Wisdom, Mr. Chatham.
Lord Religion, Bishop of St. Asaph.
Lord Justice, Mr. Camden.
Lord Patriot, Mr. Wilkes.
Bold Irishman, Mr. Burke.
Judas, Mr. Hutchinson.
Charlie, Mr. Jenkinson.
Brazen, Mr. Wedderburn.
Colonel, Mr. Barré.
Lord Boston, Mr. Gage.
Admiral Tombstone, Mr. Graves.
Elbow Room, Mr. Howe.
Mr. Caper, Mr. Burgoyne.
Lord Kidnapper, Mr. Dunmore.

Besides the foregoing persons, are Washington, Charles Lee, Putnam, Earl Percy, and several other characters, who appear in the play under their own names.

In developing the vast series of actions participated in by this army of dramatic personages, the play opens with a scene intended to fasten the attention powerfully upon the alleged origin of the American Revolution, namely, in the Jacobite designs, in the perfidy and subtlety, of Lord Bute. It is a room in the palace of St. James, where he—Lord Paramount, solus—is strutting about in an ecstacy of self-admiration, discoursing betimes upon his own greatness:—"Many long years have rolled delightfully on, whilst I have been basking in the sunshine of grandeur and power,—whilst I have imperceptibly, though not unsuspected, guided the chariot of state, and greased with the nation's gold the imperial wheels. 'T is I that move the mighty engine of royalty; and with the tincture of my somniferous opiate, or, in the language of a courtier, by the virtue of my secret influence, I have lulled the axletree to sleep, and brought on a pleasing insensibility. Let their champion, Lord Wisdom, groan; he is now become feeble and impotent—a mere cripple in politics. Their Lord Patriot's squint has lost its basilisk effect. And the Bold Irishman may bellow the Keenew till he is hoarse,—he 's no more, when compared to me, than an Irish salmon to a Scotch herring. I care not a bawbee for them all. I 'll reign in Britain—I 'll be king of their councils, and chief among the princes. Oh Ambition! thou darling of my soul, stop not till I rise superior to all superlative,—till I mount triumphantly the pinnacle of glory,—or at least open the way for one of my own family and name to enter without opposition."[1]

This soliloquy is broken by the entrance of the astute and unscrupulous Lord Mocklaw, whom Paramount had summoned as his confidential adviser, and to whom he now discloses the outline of his scheme. At the first glance, Mocklaw sees great difficulties in the way:—"You have need, my lord, of all your wisdom, fortitude and power, when you consider with whom you have to contend. Let

[1] "The Fall," etc., 1–2.

me see! Lord Wisdom, Lord Religion, Lord Justice, Lord Patriot, the Bold Irishman, and so forth, and so forth, and so forth, and the wisdom of the United Colonies of America in Congress to cope with. As individuals, they are trifling; but in league combined, may become potent enemies." To this Paramount replies: "Granted, but are you so little of a lawyer as not to know the virtue of a certain specific I 'm possessed of, that will accomplish anything, even to performing miracles? Don't you know, there 's such sweet music in the shaking of the Treasury keys, that they will instantly lock the most babbling patriot's tongue, transform a Tory into a Whig, and a Whig into a Tory, make a superannuated old miser dance, and an old cynic philosopher smile? How many thousand times has your tongue danced at Westminster Hall to the sound of such music?"

Thus the interview continues, until Lord Paramount brings it to a close by whispering to his confidant the leading details of his plan:—"Now, then, for a line of politics. I propose to begin, first, by taxing America as a blind. That will create an eternal animosity between us, and by sending over continually ships and troops, this will of course produce a civil war, weaken Britain by leaving her coasts defenceless, and impoverish America,—so that we need not fear anything from that quarter. Then, the united fleets of France and Spain, with troops, to appear in the channel and make a descent, while my kinsman, with thirty thousand men, lands in Scotland, marches to London, and joins the others. What, then, can prevent the scheme from having the wished-for effect? This is the main point,—which keep to yourself." [1]

In the subsequent Scenes of the First Act, we are permitted to watch the several moves of the game which Bute has undertaken to play, and which reaches an important stage in the closing Scene. Here we are witnesses of a meeting of the privy council, at which Judas of Massachusetts is present by special invitation. With much apparent

[1] "The Fall," etc., 4–5.

indignation, Lord Paramount lays before the Council the series of seditious acts perpetrated by the Americans in opposition to royal authority, and demands that vigorous measures be taken to put down such insolent proceedings, —a proposition which is loudly echoed, as a matter of course, by his creatures—Mocklaw, Brazen, and Poltroon. "My advice," says the latter, "is that Lord Boston and Admiral Tombstone be immediately sent to Boston, with two or three regiments,—though one would be more than sufficient,—and a few ships to shut up their ports. Disannul their charters, stop their trade; and the pusilanimous beggars,—those rascals, whose predominant passion is fear, —would immediately give up, on the first landing of the regulars, and fly before 'em like a hare before the hounds. That this would be the case, I pawn my honor to your Lordships; nay, I 'll sacrifice my life." [1] This proposition is adopted. The troops and the warships are ordered off to America; and with this ample and admirable preparation of national disaster, the First Act ends.

The Second Act presents, in one Scene, a vigorous debate in the house of lords on the American question, with speeches by Lord Wisdom, Lord Religion, and Lord Justice —all strongly against the harsh and harmful measures of the ministry; and, in another Scene, a lively conversation on the same subject between Lord Patriot, the Bold Irishman, and the Colonel. The Third Act carries the action across the Atlantic, where the logical results of Lord Bute's policy begin to shew themselves. Here we have, in one Scene, the city of Boston just after the application to it of the port bill in 1774, and the call of the first Continental Congress; in another, a preacher making announcement that their charter had been taken away, themselves proclaimed rebels, and their property doomed to confiscation; in another, the excitement and confusion in the streets of Boston on the arrival of Lord Boston with his troops and

[1] "The Fall," etc., 12.

ships; in another, Lord Boston himself, on the 19th of April, 1775, surrounded by his guards, and awaiting in great complacency the victorious return of the expedition sent out by him toward Lexington and Concord under Colonel Smith the night before. "If Colonel Smith succeeds in his embassy," says Lord Boston, musingly, "and I think there's no doubt of it, I shall have the pleasure this evening, I expect, of having my friends Hancock and Adams's good company. I 'll make each of them a present of a pair of handsome iron ruffles, and Major Provost shall provide a suitable entertainment for them in his apartment." "Sure," says an officer in reply, "they 'll not be so unpolite as to refuse your excellency's kind invitation." Lord Boston rejoins in his bland and merry way,—"Should they, Colonel Smith and Major Pitcairn have my orders to make use of all their rhetoric, and the persuasive eloquence of British thunder." [1] And while the smiles which applaud this witticism are still playing over the faces of the guards, in rushes a messenger in hot haste with news that the troops are in full retreat before the rebels. A touch of comedy is given by the Scene in which two shepherds near Lexington, Dick and Roger, talk over in bucolic language the rout and flight of the regulars; while the pathos of all this ghastly business transacted for the political accommodation of Lord Bute, comes out in the last Scene, wherein an American matron grieves over the loss of her husband, son and brother, all slain in Bunker Hill fight, which is then graphically described by a neighbor who witnessed it.

The earlier portion of the Fourth Act is laid in Virginia, and exhibits in realistic fashion the ravages of Lord Dunmore along that coast,—his alleged rapacity, cruelty, and shameless lust. After six Scenes devoted to Dunmore, the action returns to Boston, immediately after the battle of Bunker Hill. Then follows one of the most effective passages of the play—a council of war at which the chief offi-

[1] "The Fall," etc., 27–28.

cers of the army, Lord Boston, Elbow Room, Caper, Percy, and Clinton, appear to be grotesquely terrified and even paralyzed by the unexpected military capacity of the rebels, while Admiral Tombstone, bursting with a truly marine contempt for his military associates, these cowardly and baffled lubbers of the land, utters his opinion of them in frequent jets of extremely nautical phraseology. "I fully expected," maunders Lord Boston, "with the help of the last re-enforcement you brought me over, and the advice and assistance of three accomplished and experienced generals, I should have been able to have subdued the rebels, and gained immortal laurels to myself,—to have returned to Old England like a Roman consul, with a score or two of the rebel generals, colonels, and majors to have graced my triumph." Upon this slur, the conversation is taken up by Elbow Room, Percy, Clinton, and Caper, and soon becomes a bedlam of angry recrimination between them,—whereupon the bluff Admiral breaks in:—"Damn it, don't let us kick up a dust among ourselves, to be laughed at fore and aft. This is a hell of a council of war,—though I believe it will turn out one before we 've done."

Clinton: Pray, gentlemen, drop this discourse. Consider, the honor of England is at stake, and our safety depends upon this day's consultation. . . .

Lord Boston: Well, gentlemen, what are we met here for?

Admiral Tombstone: Who the devil should know, if you don't? Damn it, did n't you send for us?

Lord Boston: Our late great loss of men has tore up the foundation of our plan, and rendered all further attempts impracticable. 'T will be a long time ere we can expect any more re-enforcements; and if they should arrive, I 'm doubtful of their success.

Clinton: The provincials are vastly strong, and seem no novices in the art of war. 'T is true, we gained the hill at last, but of what advantage is it to us? None. The loss of fourteen hundred as brave men as Britain can boast of, is

a melancholy consideration, and must make our most sanguinary friends in England abate of their vigor.

Elbow Room: I never saw or read of any battle equal to it. Never was more martial courage displayed; and the provincials—to do the dogs justice—fought like heroes; fought, indeed, more like devils than men. Such carnage and destruction not exceeded by Blenheim, Minden, Fontenoy, Ramilies, Dettingen, the Battle of the Boyne; and the late affair of the Spaniards and Algerines a mere cock fight to it! No laurels there!

Mr. Caper: No, nor triumphs neither. I regret in particular the number of brave officers that fell that day, many of whom were of the first families in England.

Admiral Tombstone: Aye, a damned affair, indeed! Many powdered beaux—petit maitres—fops—fribbles—skip jackets—macaronies—jack puddings—noblemen's bastards and whores' sons fell that day; and my poor marines stood no more chance with 'em than a cat in hell without claws.

Lord Boston: It can't be helped, Admiral. What is to be done next?

Admiral Tombstone: Done?—why, what the devil have you done? Nothing yet, but eat Paramount's beef, and steal a few Yankee sheep; and that, it seems, is now become a damned lousy beggarly trade, too; for you have n't left yourselves a mouthful to eat.

(Aside.) 'Bold at the council board
But cautious in the field, he shunned the sword.'

Lord Boston: But what can we do, Admiral?

Admiral Tombstone: Do? Why, suck your paws;—that 's all you 're like to get.'' [1]

For the last Act, one Scene presents to us the American forces at the capture of Montreal; another, Ethan Allen groping about in a British dungeon, and stormily execrating his keepers, who have entered to lay him in irons; another,

[1] "The Fall," etc. 51–54.

the American army at Cambridge; and still another, Washington's grief over the news of the death of General Montgomery, and the solemn act wherein he and his generals renew their vows of devotion to the American cause, even unto death. Finally, the real purpose of the play is brought out in a pithy epilogue, with its telling allusion to a political pamphlet, the title of which was just then resounding through the land:

"Are we not men? Pray, who made men, but God?
Yet men made kings—to tremble at their nod!
What nonsense this! let 's wrong with right oppose,
Since naught will do but sound, impartial blows.
Let 's act in earnest, not with vain pretense;
Adopt the language of sound COMMON SENSE,
And with one voice proclaim—INDEPENDENCE!"[1]

VII.

During the winter of 1775 and 1776, while the British army lay shut up in the town of Boston, their officers made efforts to drive dull care away, in part, by giving theatrical performances in Faneuil Hall; and for such an entertainment, General Burgoyne, already well-known as a dramatic writer, supplied a farce ironically called "The Blockade," and intended to make light of the valor of the rebel soldiers, and of the gravity of their own situation. Shortly after their departure from the town, in March, 1776, was published there a retort in the form of a farce in three Acts, with a title that is itself a slant upon that of the play of which it is itself a mirthful reverberation. It is called "The Blockheads, or, The Affrighted Officers,"[2] and is a bit of rough fun-making which must have been greatly relished at the time, when played, as it probably was, by some of the vic-

[1] "The Fall," etc. 66.

[2] This farce is attributed to Mercy Warren, by P. L. Ford. "Beginnings of American Dramatic Literature," 16–19.

torious American soldiers for the diversion of their own comrades. The time of the play is that memorable morning on which Washington was discovered with his extemporized intrenchments on Dorchester Heights, and ready to sweep with his guns the town and the shipping. Doubtless, for many a day after the presentation of this piece, the quarters occupied by the American troops in Boston and the neighborhood rang with their shouts of merriment over the numerous and by no means delicate hits herein given at the political and military aspects of the situation,—more especially at the alleged cowardice, stupidity, and profligacy of the British soldiers, at their ridiculous sufferings from hunger during the long siege, and, finally, at the disgust and dismay of the Amercan Loyalists in Boston upon learning that their invincible protectors were about to flee for their lives.

VIII.

One proof of the effectiveness of Whig satire on the Loyalists, as contained in "The Fall of British Tyranny," is to be met with in a Loyalist retort in kind, which appears to have been written just after the American defeat on Long Island, the 27th of August, 1776, and is entitled "The Battle of Brooklyn, a Farce." The intention of this performance is to retaliate upon the rebel cause, by holding up to derision the contemptible character of its chief leaders—they being, in most cases, bar-tenders, horse-jockeys, blacklegs, ploughmen, and cobblers, transformed into colonels and generals; actuated by groveling motives; wielding their military authority in the spirit of pick-pockets and common swindlers; of low, obscene, and profligate lives. The satirical method of the play is fairly revealed in its "dramatis personæ," these being divided into two groups, contemptuously designated as "Men" and as "Women." The former are headed by four "Rebel Chiefs"—Washington, Putnam, Sullivan, and Stirling.. These are followed by

three "Colonels," to wit, "Lasher, a shoemaker of New York; Clark, a retailer of rum in Connecticut; Remsen, a farmer of Newtown, Long Island." These several dignitaries are ministered to in various capacities by "Ebenezer Snuffle, a New England parson, Chaplain to General Putnam; Joe King, servant to Sterling; Noah, servant to Sullivan; Skinner, a thief employed by Putnam."

The list of "Women" includes but two names,—"Lady Gates" and "Betty, her servant"; and the interchanges of confidence as here reported between these two women are extremely candid examples of retail traffic in the grosser scandals of the period as affecting Washington and other American leaders both military and civil. In the development of this farce, Lord Sterling is set before us as a mere pretender whose natural stupidity is quite needlessly enhanced by perpetual drunkenness. General Putnam, on the other hand, appears as a patriotic and clever scoundrel who has taken up arms for his country mainly on account of the facilities he thereby gets for petty plundering, and who is here represented as calling to sharp account one of his officers, Lieutenant Skinner, because the latter had failed to share with his chief the watches, rings and other valuables filched from the houses to which Putnam had sent him for the purpose. The military incompetence of the rebel officers and the almost universal cowardice of their men are exhibited in the immense object-lesson furnished by their defeat on Long Island and their hurried flight across the North River. In all this lavish distribution of infamy, it is perhaps possible to detect some slight forbearance toward Washington, to whom is attributed a certain superiority to the men whom he leads—a superiority, however, not extending to such particulars as low lust and political hypocrisy. The whole production is unutterably coarse —mere provender for bovine and porcine appetites—a triumphant exhibition of vigor in the flinging back of filth at the enemy—in these respects, therefore, an authentic memorial of the very spirit and procedure of the time.

IX.

The dramatic writings thus far noticed, must continue to have an interest for us, not only as illustrating the beginnings of this species of literature in America, but likewise as embodying in authentic form the thoughts and passions which warred fiercely in the minds of the American people during their Revolutionary conflict. The literary defects of these writings need not be dwelt upon, —they are obvious. It is in spite of their literary defects, —their crudity, dullness, coarseness, provincialism,—that they are worth the moment's glance which we here give to them; for they are vestiges of one entire stage of our literary development as a people, and are frank witnesses to the throes of mental and moral anguish through which we had to pass in order to become a nation. But we now approach two examples of dramatic writing having a literary merit so positive and so remarkable as to justify our study of them even on that account alone.

Hugh Henry Brackenridge demands and deserves our notice on account of two dramatic poems produced by him soon after the opening of the physical conflict of the Revolution, and having in themselves a striking distinctness of method and of purpose. Like every other writer of this period, he seems to have been deeply stirred by the significance of the military events of the first year of that conflict—the year 1775—their pathos, their tragic horror, and their prodigious messages both of warning and of good-cheer. From all these events he selects two, each as the subject of a serious dramatic poem,—the one being the first real clash between American and Briton as displayed on the seventeenth of June, upon a height in full view from Boston; the other being the death of the high-minded American leader, General Montgomery, in his baffled attempt at the capture of Quebec. Both of these dramas are wrought out with strict attention to the classic unities of time, place, and action; and both are intended merely

as dramatic poems to be read, not at all as plays to be acted.

The chief purpose of the earlier poem—"The Battle of Bunker's Hill"—published in 1776, was one exactly fitted to the need of the hour in which it sprang into life: it was to inspire Americans with military confidence by setting forth, in opposition to the old taunts of cowardice and incapacity, the remarkable fighting qualities—the almost unrivaled military effectiveness—exhibited by their brethren in that battle. This is the controlling idea of the poem; and while it is indicated from the very beginning of the action, the full development of it is delayed till near the end, when it is accomplished with striking effect in the form of spontaneous admissions from the lips of the victorious British officers then commenting on the battle they had just won at so great a cost. Finally, the lesson of military confidence which the poem is meant to teach, has an added impressiveness from the fact that the poet, while recognizing the physical conditions on which military success depends, gives great prominence, also, to the moral conditions of such success. Thus, the object for which a man fights, is sure to tell on his success in fighting. Certainly, the justice or the injustice of one's cause must count for something. There is a power in the world which makes for the victory of righteousness—even upon a battle-field. And it is to this higher sphere of prediction, even with reference to the ultimate result of the physical struggle in which they were then engaged, that the poet seeks to raise his fellow-countrymen, as he develops in this drama the immense moral contrast between the objects of the two opposing armies,—the implication being that the moral superiority of the American cause must be taken into the account as some offset to its inferiority in physical force.

On the evening of a certain day in June, 1775, two military councils are held: the one in Cambridge, by three high officers of the American army—Putnam, Warren, and Gardiner; the other only a few miles away, in Boston, by the

British commander, Gage, and his two generals, Howe and Burgoyne. The result of the former council is a forward movement of a portion of the American army, that very night, to the heights of Bunker Hill, in the hope of drawing out the enemy from their shelter within the city. The result of the latter council is an order reluctantly given by Gage at the demand of his two generals, for an advance of a portion of the British army the very next morning against the rebel force supposed to be still lying inactive in Cambridge. Of course, by the dawn of day, the British discover that the rebels have already come more than half way to meet them,—a fact which is thus hurriedly announced by Burgoyne to the commanding General:

"The rebel foe, grown yet more insolent
By that small loss or rout at Lexington,
Prevent our purpose; and the night by-past
Have pushed intrenchments and some flimsy works,
With rude achievement, on the rocky brow
Of that tall hill. A ship-boy, with the day,
From the tall mast-head of the admiral,
Descried their aim, and gave the swift alarm.
Our glasses mark but one small regiment there;
Yet every hour we languish in delay
Inspires fresh hope, and fills their pigmy souls
With thoughts of holding it. You hear the sound
Of spades and pick-axes upon the hill,
Incessant, pounding like old Vulcan's forge
Urged by the Cyclops."[1]

These words of Burgoyne are scarcely spoken, when General Howe rushes upon the scene, exclaiming:

"To your alarm posts, officers! Come, gallant souls,
Let 's out, and drive them from that eminence
On which the foe doth earth himself.
I relish not such haughty neighborhood.
Give orders swiftly to the admiral,

[1] "The Battle," etc. 18–19.

That some stout ship heave up the narrow bay,
And pour indignant from the full-tide wave
Fierce cannonade, across the isthmus point,
That no assistance may be brought to them.
If but seven hundred, we can treat with them—
Yes, strew the hill with death and carcasses,
And offer up this band a hecatomb
To Britain's glory, and the cause of kings."[1]

As they hasten from the place, poor Gage, who is the one ludicrous character in the poem, being portrayed as an indolent and cowardly voluptuary, is left alone, maundering to himself of his guilt and fear:

"May Heaven protect us from their rage, I say.
When but a boy, I dreamed of Death in bed;
And ever since that time, I hated things
Which put him, like a pair of spectacles,
Before my eyes. The thought lies deep in fate,
Nor can a mortal see the bottom of it
'T is here—'t is there—I could philosophize—
Eternity, is like a winding sheet—
The seven Commandments like—I think there 's seven.
. . . . . .
Oh Bute and Dartmouth, knew ye what I feel,
You sure would pity an old drinking-man
That has more heart-ache than philosophy!"[2]

By this time, General Howe has conducted a division of the army across the bay which separates them from that steep hill on which the enemy have taken position; and pausing at the shore, he prepares their minds for a task that is likely to prove a costly one:

"Behold yon hill, where fell Rebellion rears
Her snake-streamed ensign, and would seem to brave,
With scarce seven hundred, this sea-bounded camp,

[1] "The Battle," etc. 19.

[2] Ibid. 20.

Where may be counted full ten thousand men
That in the war with France so late acquired
Loud fame, and shook the other continent.
Come on, brave soldiers, seize your gleaming arms,
And let this day in after times be held
As Minden famous, and each hostile field
Where British valor shone victorious.
The time moves slow which enviously detains
Our just resentment from these traitors' heads.
Their richest farms and cultured settlements,
By winding river or extensive bay,
Shall be your just reward. Our noble king,
As things confiscate, holds their property,
And in rich measure will bestow on you
Who face the frowns and labor of this day.
He that outlives this battle, shall ascend
In titled honor to the height of state;
Dukedoms and baronies, midst these our foes
In tributary vassalage kept down,
Shall be your fair inheritance. Come on,
Beat up the heroic sound of war! The word
Is—'George our sovereign, and Britannia's arms.'"[1]

Meanwhile, from behind their intrenchments on the hill-top, the Americans can see the British upon the opposite shore, mustering for the attack. Warren first addresses the little band, trying to lift them by his words to the height of any sacrifice, and saying, as he closes,

"The word is 'Liberty'—
And Heaven smile on us in so just a cause!"[2]

Thereupon, Colonel Gardiner, as he leads his men to the engagement, says to them:

"Fear not, brave soldiers, though their infantry,
In deep array, so far out-number us.
The justness of our cause will brace each arm,

[1] "The Battle," etc. 21–22. [2] Ibid. 24.

And steel the soul with fortitude; while they,
Whose guilt hangs trembling on their consciences,
Must fail in battle, and receive that death
Which, in high vengeance, we prepare for them.
Let, then, each spirit, to the height wound up,
Shew noble vigor and full force this day.
For, on the merit of our swords is placed
The virgin honor and true character
Of this whole continent ; and one short hour
May give complexion to the whole event,
Fixing the judgment whether as base slaves
We serve these masters, or more nobly live—
Free as the breeze that on the hill-top plays,
With these sweet fields and tenements our own.
Oh fellow soldiers, let this battle speak
Dire disappointment to the insulting foe,
Who claim our fair possessions, and set down
These cultured farms and bowery hills and plains
As the rich prize of certain victory.
Shall we, the sons of Massachusetts-Bay,
New Hampshire and Connecticut, shall we
Fall back, dishonored, from our native plains,
Mix with the savages, and roam for food
On western mountains, or the desert shores
Of Canada's cold lakes? or, state more vile,
Sit down in humble vassalage, content
To till the ground for these proud conquerors?" [1]

Thus, to the end of the poem, the scene shifts in quick succession from one side of the fight to the other; and at every stage of its progress comes out in deeper colors the contrast in moral significance between the objects of the two armies. This effect reaches its culmination in a noble scene wherein the very defeat of the Americans is consecrated by the blood of their chieftain, Warren. This leader—a hero of the antique mold, one of Plutarch's men—having received his death wound, falls upon his right knee, and "covering his

[1] "The Battle," etc. 25–26.

breast with his right hand, and supporting himself with his firelock in his left," spends his fast-ebbing strength in this appeal to his comrades:

"By the last parting breath
And blood of this your fellow soldier slain,
Be now adjured never to yield the right,—
The grand deposit of all-giving Heaven
To man's free nature,—that he rules himself!
With these rude Britons wage life-scorning war,
Till they admit it, and like hell fall off,
With ebbing billows, from this troubled coast,
Where, but for them, firm concord and true love
Should individual hold their court and reign.
The infernal enginery of state resist
To death, that unborn times may be secure;
And while men flourish in the peace you win,
Write each fair name with worthies of the earth.
. . . . . .
Weep not for him who first espoused the cause,
And risking life, hath met the enemy
In fatal opposition—but rejoice!
For now I go to mingle with the dead,—
Great Brutus, Hampden, Sidney, and the rest,
Of old or modern memory, who lived
A mound to tyrants, and strong hedge to kings,
Bounding the inundation of their rage
Against the happiness and peace of man."

Then, as the film thickens over his eyes, more distinct becomes the vision of that overarching sphere to which he sees himself beckoned by hands that cannot receive the indignity of death:

"I see these heroes where they walk serene,
By crystal currents, on the vale of Heaven,
High in full converse of immortal acts
Achieved for truth and innocence on earth.
Meantime the harmony and thrilling sound

Of mellow lutes, sweet viols, and guitars
Dwell on the soul, and ravish every nerve.
Anon the murmur of the tight-braced drum,
With finely varied fifes to martial airs,
Winds up the spirit to the mighty proof
Of siege and battle, and attempt in arms.
Illustrious group! They beckon me along,
To ray my visage with immortal light,
And bind the amaranth around my brow.
I come, I come, ye first-born of true fame.
Fight on, my countrymen, be free, be free!"[1]

At last, therefore, having thrice repulsed the enemy, driving them thrice with almost unexampled slaughter down the hill, the little army of the rebels "overpowered by numbers are obliged to retreat;" whereupon, amid the huzzas of victory, the British leaders concede and emphasize the military significance of these displays of prowess and of soldierlike efficiency on the part of men till that day set down for cowards. Thus, Richardson, a young British officer, on the parapet, exclaims,

"The day is ours, huzza, the day is ours;
This last attack has forced them to retreat.

CLINTON.

'T is true, full victory declares for us,
But we have dearly, dearly purchased it.
Full fifteen hundred of our men lie dead,
Who, with their officers, do swell the list
Of this day's carnage. On the well-fought hill,
Whole ranks cut down lie struggling with their wounds,
Or close their bright eyes in the shades of night.
No wonder! such incessant musketry
And fire of cannon, from the hill-top poured,
Seemed not the agency of mortal men,
But heaven itself with snares and vengeance armed

[1] "The Battle," etc. 28–29.

T' oppose our gaining it. E'en when was spent
Their ammunition, and fierce Warren slain,
Huge stones were hurlëd from the rocky brow,
And war renewed by these inveterate,
Till Gard'ner wounded, the left wing gave way,
And with their shattered infantry, the whole,
Drawn off by Putnam, to the causeway fled;
When from the ships and batt'ries on the wave
They met deep loss, and strewed the narrow bridge
With lifeless carcasses. . . .

LORD PIGOT.

The day is ours, but with heart-piercing loss
Of soldiers slain and gallant officers.
. . . . . .
Should every hill, by the rebellious foe
So well defended, cost thus dear to us,
Not the united forces of the world
Could master them, and the proud rage subdue
Of these AMERICANS.

HOWE.

E'en in an enemy I honor worth
And valor eminent. The vanquished foe
In feats of prowess shew their ancestry,
And speak their birth legitimate,—
The sons of Britons, with the genuine flame
Of British heat and valor in their veins." [1]

X.

The second of the two dramatic poems of Brackenridge, "The Death of General Montgomery, at the Siege of Quebec," was published in 1777. Its chief purpose was to stimulate American military ardor by stimulating American hatred of the enemy; and this it sought to accomplish through a presentation of their detestable character, espe-

[1] "The Battle," etc. 33–35.

cially their sordidness, perfidy, and cruelty. Thus, in the two poems, the argument is made complete: first, that we have the ability to fight the British; and, secondly, that we have every possible motive for fighting them—since they are monsters of greed, treachery, and inhumanity.

The entire action of this tragedy takes place in the hours between midnight and dawn of the last day of the year 1775,—the time which was actually fixed by General Montgomery for his attempt to capture by escalade that stout city which he had tried in vain, during the previous four weeks, to capture by siege. In the first Scene, is given a view of the American camp before Quebec, in the deep silence of a long December night, with Montgomery and Benedict Arnold holding conference together,—a conference of which the first words that reach us are these, as spoken by Montgomery:

"The third hour turning from the midnight watch,
By no ray visited of moon or star,
Marks to our enterprise its proper date.
Now from above, on every hill and copse,
The airy element descends in snow,
And with the dark winds from the howling North,
Commixed and driven on the bounded sight,
Gives tumult privacy, and shrouds the march;
So that our troops, in reg'ment or brigade,
May undistinguished to the very walls
Move up secure, and scale the battlements,—
May force the barred gates of this lofty town,
On all sides bound with artificial rock,
Of cloud-capped eminence impregnable—
Impregnable so long, and fully proof
To all our battery and sharp cannonade;
But yet, assailed with vigor and full force,
This morn, I trust, we enter it in storm,
And from its bosom long defiled, pluck
This scorpion progeny, this mixëd brood
Of wild-wood savages and Englishmen
Who 'gainst their brethren, in unrighteous cause,

With cruel perfidy have wagëd war.
Against their brethren, did I say? O God!
Are we the offspring of that cruel foe
Who late at Montreal, with symbol dire,
Did call the savages to taste of blood,
Life-warm and streaming from the bullock slain,
And with fell language—told it was the blood
Of a Bostonian—made the sacrament?
At this the hell-hounds, with infernal gust,
To the snuffed wind held up their blood-stained mouths,
And filled with howlings the adjacent hills." [1]

With such vigor, with such unhesitant tones of abhorrence, does the poet give us the key-note of this drama. Presently, Montgomery communicates to Arnold the details of his plan for the assault upon the city, which was to be made simultaneously at three different points; whereupon Arnold takes his exit in order to prepare for the part assigned to him. Then follow two or three Scenes of great tenderness and nobility, in which the poet contrives to exhibit, in sharp opposition to the execrable and loathsome qualities attributed to the enemy, the fine and high traits of the American leaders in this daring enterprise,—their superiority to sordid motives, their pure love of country and of fame, their kinship with the great military heroes of England's past, and above all their sensibility in that particular spot to all that is lofty, radiant, and inspiring in the memory of Wolfe. Two of Montgomery's staff are Macpherson and Chessman—young fellows noted in their day for great personal attractiveness, and especially for chivalry of character. Of Macpherson the General is particularly fond; and it is to him, in that deep stillness before the crash and agony of battle, that the elder man now reveals his own prescience of the near fate which then awaited them both, as well as the ideals of glory in pursuit of which they could meet that fate with serenity:

[1] "The Death," etc. 9–10.

"It seems to me, Macpherson, that we tread
The ground of some romantic fairy land,
Where knights in armor, and high combatants
Have met in war. This is the plain where Wolfe,
Victorious Wolfe, fought with the brave Montcalm;
And even yet, the dreary snow-clad tomb
Of many a hero, slaughtered on that day,
Recalls the memory of the bloody strife.
I believe not superstition, or the dreams
Of high-wrought fantasy that fill the brain,
But yet methinks, Macpherson, that I feel
Within this hour some knowledge of my end,—
Some sure presentiment that you and I,
This day, shall be with them, shall leave
Our breathless bodies on this mortal soil.
But this allotment, should it be our case,
Fear not, young soldier, for our cause is just;
And all those failings we are conscious of,
Shall in the bosom of our God repose,
Who looks with mercy on the sons of men,
And hides their imperfections with his love.
Say not, young soldier, that thy life was short—
In the first bloom of manhood swift cut off.
All things are mortal—but the warrior's fame;
This lives eternal in the mouths of men.

MACPHERSON.

The light is sweet, and death is terrible;
But when I left my father and my friends,
I thought of this, and counted it but gain,
If fighting bravely in my country's cause,
I tasted death, and met an equal fame
With those at Lexington, and Bunker's Hill.

MONTGOMERY.

Sweet fame, young hero, shall attend thy years;
And linked in friendship, as we are linked in death,
Our souls shall mount, and visit those fair hills

Where never-dying bards and heroes stray.
There Wolfe shall hail us, and the great Montcalm
Shall bind the amaranth around our brows;
For mighty warriors, though opposëd here,
There live serene, in heavenly amity,
And walk and taste of conference sublime.
Go, then, young soldier, and these orders bear
To Colonel Campbell, and to Livingston.
The disposition for the attack is here.
Bid them be ready, when the morning breaks,
To try this city by an escalade."[1]

In the progress of the drama, the chief incidents of the attack on Quebec are indicated; Montgomery, Chessman, and Macpherson are slain; heroic valor in the fight is shown by Arnold, Burr, Oswald, Morgan, Lamb, and the rest of the American warriors; the ghost of General Montgomery appears upon the field of his glorious death, pronouncing woe upon the king and parliament, and predicting final victory for the Americans and the birth of a great, free empire in the new world; and at last, Carleton, the British general, comes upon the "wall of the Upper Town, exposing the body of Montgomery," and calling upon the Americans to surrender under promise of honorable and generous treatment. Upon these terms, they lay down their arms; whereupon Carleton, violating his promise, turns upon them with these fiendish words:

"Now, in my power, disarmëd and reduced,
I will give scope, and scorn you with my tongue.
You vile rebellious progeny of wrath,
Fierce and malignant in Don Quixotism
Of moon-mad liberty! You bedlam-brood,
You viper-lipped and serpent-hearted race,
Bred on the poison of foul fraud and hate,
Scum and offscouring of humanity,
Whom laws of government to the sure cord

[1] "The Death," etc. 14–16.

Have ever destinëd! And were it not
That the black vengeance of your countrymen
Might dare retaliate, and gibbet up
Some British prisoner, each soul should hang,
And die this day, in execrable form,
The death of traitors. Yet, whatever shape
Of suffering horrible can be devised,
In dreary dungeon, and in obscure jail,
Cold, dark, and comfortless, and lacking bread,
Shall be your lot, snake-venomed parricides.
And first, three victims from your shattered band
Must to the savages be given up,—
Some three Bostonians sacrificed and slain,
To glut the appetites of Indian chiefs
Who at our cantico at Montreal,
Drank of the ox-blood, roasting his large limbs,
Symbolical of rebels burnt with fire.
Take these three men, ye Indian warriors,
And use them wantonly, with every pain
Which flame's fierce element can exercise;
And with the sound of each loud instrument,
The drum, the horn, in wildest symphony
With your own howlings, shall the scene be graced,
Save that in terror oftentimes awhile
The noise shall cease, and their own cries be heard."[1]

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[1] In the original publication of this tragedy, there is a footnote by the author referring to these and other words attributed to General Carleton: "Want of candor is very blameable, even in the account given of an enemy. For this reason I have been sometimes uneasy lest these words put into the mouth of General Carleton, should seem to give a coloring to his character beyond the real complexion of his Excellency's conduct. But I find my conscience pretty much at ease in this matter, when I give my memory time to recollect the inhumanity of the officers and soldiers under his command to our prisoners, from the moment our affairs began to be on the decline in Canada. . . . I have conversed with those who saws the scalps warm from the heads of our countrymen. I have had the relation from their mouths who beheld the fires lighted up, and heard, with a soul-paining sympathy, the horrid shrieks and gloomy howlings of the savage tribes in the execution of the poor captives who, according to the threat of Carleton, were burned on an island in the river St. Lawrence after our unfortunate surrender at the Cedars." P. 51.

Of course, the captives remind Carleton of his promise, and appeal to him to be just to them, even if not merciful; but he hardens his heart against them, reiterates his orders, and increases his threats of further vengeance. In view of all this, the gallant Virginian officer, Morgan, speaks these words, which form a fitting close to the poem:

"Sad thought of cruelty and outrage dire!
Not to be paralleled 'mongst human kind,
Save in the tales of flesh-devouring men,
The one-eyed Cyclops, and fierce Cannibal.
For what we hear of Saracen or Turk,
Mogul, or Tartar of Siberia,
Is far behind the deed of infamy
And horror mixed, which Britons meditate.
Nature herself, degenerate from the fall,
In the cursed earth can scarcely furnish out
So much black poison from the beasts and herbs,
As swells the dark hearts of these Royalists.
The toad's foul mouth, the snake's envenomed bite,
Black spider, asp, or froth of rabid dog
Is not so deadly as these murderers.
When men far off, in civilizēd states,
Shall know the perfidy and breach of faith,
The thought remorseless and dire act of these,
In every language they shall execrate
The earth-disgracing name of Englishmen:
And at the Last Day, when the Pit receives
Her gloomy brood, and seen among the rest
Some spirit distinguishēd by ampler swell
Of malice, envy, and soul-griping hate,
Pointing to him, the foul and ugly ghosts
Of hell shall say—'That was an Englishman.'"[1]

[1] "The Death," etc. 48–53.

XI.

In 1778 Addison's "Tragedy of Cato" was played at the Bow Street Theatre, Portsmouth, New Hampshire. An epilogue for the play was written by Jonathan Mitchell Sewall, which shews how even quite disinterested theatrical representations then responded to the military themes that were then universal. This epilogue is a parallel between Rome in the time of Cato, and America in the time of its Revolutionary struggle; and its concluding lines have never yet been forgotten among us:

> "Rise, then, my countrymen! for fight prepare,
> Gird on your swords, and fearless rush to war!
> For your grieved country nobly dare to die,
> And empty all your veins for liberty.
> No pent-up Utica contracts your powers,
> But the whole boundless continent is yours!"[1]

XII.

"The Motley Assembly: a Farce, published for the Entertainment of the Curious," in Boston, in 1779, is but a slight affair in itself, but of no little significance to us now as an American satire upon certain Americans in high life whose patriotism had then grown cool under the shade of misfortune to the American cause. It is particularly aimed at the upper circles of society in Boston, where it seems then to have become fashionable to sneer at the Revolutionary cause, to speak patronizingly of Washington, to denounce the French allies as both inefficient and perfidious, and to indulge in pensive regrets for the good old days of the British occupation, when Boston society was made gorgeous by the presence of innumerable British officers. Into such a company of high-bred Bostonians, where

[1] "Occasional Addresses." Edited by Laurence Hutton and William Carey. New York, 1890.

"Whigs and Tories, joined by wayward chance,
Should hand in hand lead on the sprightly dance,"[1]

comes one day "Captain Aid," a gallant young officer of the Revolutionary army. He accepts a glass of wine; and having drunk to the health of the ladies, and of "Mr. Runt," the only person of his own sex whom he finds there, he very properly proposes the health of "his most Christian Majesty, and godlike, glorious Washington." To this toast, Mrs. Flourish, the hostess, responds with an almost inaudible assent; whereupon the excellent little "Mr. Runt" speaks up:

"With all my heart, Captain. I really take that Washington to be a very clever fellow.

Aid: Let us be silent on that subject, Mr. Runt—we have neither time nor talents to do it justice.

Mrs. Flourish: Why, he is no more than man, Captain Aid.

Aid: Then all mankind beside are less, madam.

Mrs. Flourish: You have not seen all mankind, sir. I believe Mr. Washington, or General Washington, if you please, is a very honest, good kind of a man, and has taken infinite pains to keep your army together, and I wish he may find his account in it. But doubtless there are his equals—so say no more.

Aid: If you meant that as a compliment, madam, it is really so cold a one, that it has made me shiver. I will, therefore, with your leave, drop the subject, and take another glass of wine.

Runt: Ay, ay, that 's right, Captain—I think there are more fit subjects for a young gentleman's contemplation in this room.

Aid: Still gallant, Mr. Runt. But the ladies must pardon me if I cannot readily assent to the justice of your rebuke, when I assure them that such charms as theirs would justify my inattention to any other subject but what concerns my general or my country.

[1] "The Motley Assembly," 15. These lines are a part of the epilogue.

Miss Taxall: I believe we are all very ready to pardon your inattention to us at all times.

Aid: Curse your impudence. [Aside.] Knowing my inclination and particular attention to please and oblige the ladies, you say what you please without the hazard of offending. And—as you seem disposed at this time to be merry at my expense—I am extremely sorry to deprive you of the opportunity by being obliged to leave you. [Exit Aid.]" [1]

XIII.

Our record of the dramatic writings produced here during the Revolutionary time, comes to a rather inglorious end in a piece of crudity which, for its title, repeats one already made use of: "The Blockheads, or, Fortunate Contractor. An Opera, in Two Acts, as it was performed at New York. The music entirely new, composed by several of the most eminent masters in Europe." Printed in London in 1782,[2] it professes to be a reprint of an edition already issued in New York. It embodies in light, colloquial form, and with some amusing parts in dialect—as between a Frenchman and a Dutchman—those satirical views of the French alliance which were then sincerely cherished by the Loyalists in New York and elsewhere.

[1] "The Motley Assembly," 9–10. That this play was by Mercy Warren, is the not improbable suggestion of P. L. Ford. "Beginnings of American Dramatic Literature," 24.

[2] A copy of this rare tract is in the Lenox Library. I do not know that any one has yet come across a copy of the earlier New York edition, which, after all, may have been a myth.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

PRISON LITERATURE.

I.—Special interest attaching to narratives of American prisoners of war in the hands of the British—Ethan Allen—His complex character, and his achievements with sword and tongue—A prisoner of war from 1775 to 1778—"A Narrative of Colonel Ethan Allen's Captivity"—Its quality as a book—Reasons for the severities bestowed upon him—His experience with General Prescott in Canada—His voyage to England—His treatment there—The astonishment excited by him among the natives of that isle—His compulsory voyages on various British vessels—At Cape Fear, Halifax, New York—On parole in New York—His sight of the sufferings of American prisoners there.

II.—"A Narrative of the Capitivity and Treatment of John Dodge by the English at Detroit," 1779.

III.—The bad prëeminence of the British prison-ships in New York harbor—"The Old Jersey Captive, or, a Narrative of the Captivity of Thomas Andros on board the Old Jersey Prison-Ship," 1781—The career of Andros from the outbreak of hostilities till 1781—His capture—His descriptions of the "Old Jersey," and of the ways of life and death thereon.

IV.—"A Narrative of the Capture of Henry Laurens, and of His Confinement in the Tower of London"—The high character of Laurens—His career as merchant and statesman—President of Congress—Sails as American commissioner to Holland in 1780—His capture at sea—His imprisonment in the Tower from 1780 to 1782—The charm of his story of this experience.

I.

PERHAPS no aspect of the Revolutionary war has touched more powerfully the imagination and sympathy of the American people, than that relating to the sufferings borne by their own sailors and soldiers who chanced to fall as prisoners into the hands of the enemy; and for many years after the war, the bitterness which it brought into the hearts of men, was kept alive and was hardened into a perdurable race-tradition through the tales which were told by the sur-

vivors of the British prison-pens and especially of the British prison-ships.

The most celebrated of all these narratives of military captivity was that produced in 1779 by Ethan Allen, a blustering frontier hero of not unchallenged political integrity[1]; described by a fellow-patriot in the first year of the war as "a high-flying genius," who "pursues every scheme on its first impression, without consideration, and [with] much less judgment"[2]; an able-minded ignoramus, of rough and ready humor, of boundless self-confidence, and of a shrewdness in thought and action equal to almost any emergency; a warrior who, "when barred up in gold lace . . . felt himself as grand as the Great Mogul,"[3] and who, having fighting abilities of the dramatic and oratorical kind, was not incapable, upon occasion, of playing the part of military wind-bag and braggart conqueror.

Having won great notoriety by his exploit in the capture of Ticonderoga in May, 1775, he was, in the following autumn, invited to accompany the little army under General Montgomery upon its march into Canada. Before very long, while in command of a small party of troops not far from Montreal, he was put to flight, overtaken, and forced to surrender; he then remained as a prisoner in the hands of the enemy for nearly three years,—gaining his liberty, upon exchange, in May, 1778. Before the end of March, 1779, he had written out his story of this long and bitter experience, which he published under the title of "A Narrative of Colonel Ethan Allen's Captivity."[4]

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[1] The question of Ethan Allen's alleged treason to the American cause is briefly stated in "The Magazine of Am. Hist.," viii., 221–222; and on pages 438–439 of the same volume is an article by H. E. Hayden, discrediting the charge.

[2] "The New England Chronicle," for 2 Nov., 1775.

[3] So described in 1781 by an eye-witness of his splendor, Ann Eliza Bleecker, in her "Works," 153.

[4] First published in Philadelphia in 1779, and repeatedly there and elsewhere during the Revolution; since then at Philadelphia in 1799, at Walpole in 1807, at Albany in 1814, at Burlington in 1838 and 1846, in Boston in 1845 and 1849,

Of this little book, it may fairly be said, that it is a mirror not only of its author's character, but of that of many of his compatriots—especially along the rougher edge of our American society. As a literary crudity, we may easily deride it, and fling it aside as beneath our notice; but it instructs us, it amuses us, it does not bore us; and with all its grotesque faults, it is an authentic American product of the period. We cannot wonder at its popularity: it is a series of staunch, blunt, boastful, blundering, fearless words from out of the heart of a typical American man, and it easily finds it way again to the hearts of all such. Indeed, there is in Ethan Allen's "Narrative" so much of the best and of the worst qualities of his Revolutionary fellow-countrymen—so much talent, energy, ingenuity, audacity, such composure in the presence of danger and pain, such rampant scorn of authority or discipline, such humor and good humor, such invincible hope, such impatience, such irascibility, such colossal egotism, that we can hardly go wrong in accepting it as a thing having the very age and body of the time—his form and pressure.

As Ethan Allen was captured nearly a year before the Declaration of Independence, and while as yet the colonial uprising was under the first opprobrium attaching to a flagrant case of rebellion, it was inevitable that he, as a most conspicuous and a most dangerous rebel, should have had to

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at Dayton in 1849, and probably at other times and places beyond present record. I have looked into many of these editions, but for the present purpose have used the Burlington edition of 1846—absurdly calling itself the "fourth edition." Ethan Allen was fond of nearly all sorts of big things, especially of big book-titles, of which his own title to this book is a model: "A Narrative of Colonel Ethan Allen's Captivity, from the Time of his being taken by the British, near Montreal, on the 25th Day of September, 1775, to the Time of his Exchange, on the 6th Day of May, 1778: Containing his Voyages and Travels, with the most remarkable Occurrences respecting himself and many other Continental Prisoners of different Ranks and Characters, which fell under his Observation, in the course of the same; particularly, the Destruction of the Prisoners at New York, by General Sir William Howe, in the Years 1776 and 1777. Interspersed with some political Observations. Written by Himself and now published for the Information of the Curious in all Nations."

bear the very brunt of all the contempt and wrath—of all that craving for instant and savage vengeance upon him—which his captors would so naturally feel. It is probable that in all the Thirteen Colonies was then to be found no other man better fitted by boldness, adroitness, toughness, pride, fortitude, cheerfulness, and by terrific volubility in invective, to be a pioneer prisoner in the hands of the British, and to educate them, as it were, in the graces and virtues of a proper conduct towards us, by giving every Briton to his face scorn for scorn, a pride like his own or like Lucifer's, a fearlessness that could defy the Tower or Tyburn or Tophet, a tenacity of will that was able to wear out any tormentor; finally, an amplitude and an appalling humor in profane swearing well calculated to disconcert and abash the very men who called themselves his masters. From the beginning he seems to have fixed upon the line of conduct which he should hold towards them: no meekness, no deference, no apology, no acknowledgment of wrong or of inferiority, no submission to insult or abuse, no solicitation of kindness as a mere favor, above all, no whining, and an imperturbable demand for his rights as a patriot, a prisoner of war, and a gentleman. "No abuse was offered me," says he, in giving an account of his capture, "till I came to the barrack yard at Montreal, where I met General Prescott, who asked me my name—which I told him. He then asked me whether I was that Colonel Allen who took Ticonderoga. I told him I was the very same man. Then he shook his cane over my head, calling many hard names—among which he frequently used the word 'rebel'—and put himself in a great rage. I told him he would do well not to cane me—for I was not accustomed to it—and shook my fist at him, telling him that was the beetle of mortality for him if he offered to strike; upon which Captain M'Cloud, of the British, pulled him by the skirt and whispered to him, as he afterwards told me, to this import—that it was inconsistent with his honor to strike a prisoner."[1] After some delay

[1] "Narrative," etc. 29.

and various exciting incidents, General Prescott "made me the following reply: 'I will not execute you now, but you shall grace a halter at Tyburn, God damn you.' I remember I disdained his mentioning such a place. I was, notwithstanding, a little pleased with the expression, as it significantly conveyed to me the idea of postponing the present appearance of death. Besides, his sentence was by no means final as to 'gracing a halter,'—although I had some anxiety about it after I landed in England, as the reader will find in the course of this history. General Prescott then ordered one of his officers to take me on board the 'Gaspee' schooner of war, and confine me, hands and feet, in irons,—which was done the same afternoon I was taken."[1]

"The handcuff was of the common size and form; but my leg-irons, I should imagine, would weigh thirty pounds. The bar was eight feet long, and very substantial; the shackles, which encompassed my ankles, were very tight. I was told by the officer who put them on, that it was the king's plate; and I heard other of their officers say, that it would weigh forty-weight. The irons were so close upon my ankles that I could not lay down in any other manner than on my back. I was put into the lowest and most wretched part of the vessel, where I got the favor of a chest to sit on. The same answered for my bed at night; . . . I was confined in the manner I have related, on board the 'Gaspee' schooner, about six weeks; during which time I was obliged to throw out plenty of extravagant language, which answered certain purposes at that time, better than to grace a history. To give an instance: upon being insulted, in a fit of anger I twisted off a nail with my teeth —which I took to be a ten-penny nail; it went through the mortise of the bar of my handcuff. And at the same time, I swaggered over those who abused me; particularly a Doctor Dace, who told me that I was outlawed by New York, and deserved death for several years past, was at last fully ripened for the halter, and in a fair way to obtain it.

[1] "Narrative," etc. 30–31.

When I challenged him, he excused himself in consequence, as he said, of my being a criminal; but I flung such a flood of language at him that it shocked him and the spectators —for my anger was very great. I heard one say—'Damn him, can he eat iron?'"[1]

Frequently in the course of his story—as in the foregoing passages—the hero refers with no little satisfaction to his own extraordinary gift for the use of strong language—those explosive and sulphurous vocables with which, in cases of conflict with his fellow-men, he seems to have flooded the entire neighborhood, and to have imparted to his antagonists a horror-stricken desire for some form of rapid retreating motion. After a voyage of about forty days, during which he received the most brutal treatment, the vessel came within sight of the English coast; "soon after which," says he, "the prisoners were taken from their gloomy abode, being permitted to see the light of the sun, and breathe fresh air, which to us was very refreshing. The day following, we landed at Falmouth. . . . When the prisoners were landed, multitudes of the citizens of Falmouth, excited by curiosity, crowded to see us, which was equally gratifying to us. I saw numbers on the tops of houses; and the rising adjacent grounds were covered with them. The throng was so great, that the king's officers were obliged to draw their swords and force a passage to Pendennis Castle, which was near a mile from the town, where we were closely confined, in consequence of orders from General Carleton, who then commanded in Canada. . . . The reader will readily conceive I was anxious about my preservation, knowing that I was in the power of a haughty and cruel nation. . . . Those that daily came in great numbers out of curiosity to see me, both gentle and simple, united in this—that I would be hanged. A gentleman from America, by the name of Temple, and who was friendly to me, just whispered me in the ear, and told me that bets were laid in London that I would be exe-

[1] "Narrative," etc. 30–34.

cuted; he likewise privately gave me a guinea, but durst say but little to me."[1] "I could not but feel inwardly extremely anxious for my fate. This I, however, concealed from the prisoners, as well as from the enemy who were perpetually shaking the halter at me. I nevertheless treated them with scorn and contempt. . . . I now clearly recollect that my mind was so resolved, that I would not have trembled or shewn the least fear, as I was sensible it could not alter my fate, nor do more than reproach my memory, make my last act despicable to my enemies, and eclipse the other actions of my life. For I reasoned thus: that nothing was more common than for men to die with their friends around them, weeping and lamenting over them, but not able to help them, which was in reality not different in the consequence of it from such a death as I was apprehensive of; and as death was the natural consequence of animal life, to which the laws of nature subject mankind, to be timorous and uneasy as to the event and manner of it, was inconsistent with the character of a philosopher and soldier. The cause I was engaged in, I ever viewed worthy hazarding my life for; nor was I, in the most critical moments of trouble, sorry that I engaged in it; and as to the world of spirits, though I knew nothing of the mode or manner of it, I expected nevertheless, when I should arrive at such a world, that I should be as well treated as other gentlemen of my merit."[2]

It fell in with his sense of the comic element so plentifully mixed with all this tragedy, that the ingenuous natives of the English isle were apparently impressed with a notion that he was some uncouth monster of the American forests, gifted with powers extraordinary, possibly supernatural, very likely dangerous; and it gave him amusement to minister to this impression, while never failing to demand for himself the treatment due to his character as an American patriot and hero. "I am apprehensive," he says, "my Canadian dress contributed not a little to the surprise

[1] "Narrative," etc. 40–42.

[2] Ibid. 44–46.

and excitement of curiosity. To see a gentleman in England regularly dressed and well behaved, would be no sight at all; but such a rebel as they were pleased to call me, it is probable, was never before seen in England."[1] "Among the great numbers of people who came to the castle to see the prisoners, some gentlemen told me that they had come fifty miles on purpose to see me, and desired to ask me a number of questions. . . . Then one of them asked me, what my occupation in life had been. I answered him, that in my younger days I had studied divinity, but was a conjurer by profession. He replied, that I conjured wrong at the time I was taken; and I was obliged to own that I mistook a figure at that time, but that I had conjured them out of Ticonderoga. This was a place of great notoriety in England, so that the joke seemed to go in my favor.

"It was a common thing for me to be taken out of close confinement into a spacious green in the castle, or rather parade, where numbers of gentlemen and ladies were ready to see and hear me. I often entertained such audiences with harangues on the impracticability of Great Britain's conquering the then colonies of America. At one of these times I asked a gentleman for a bowl of punch, and he ordered his servant to bring it,—which he did, and offered it to me; but I refused to take it from the hand of his servant. He then gave it to me with his own hand,—refusing to drink with me in consequence of my being a state-criminal. However, I took the punch, and drank it all down at one draught, and handed the gentleman the bowl. This made the spectators, as well as myself, merry."[2]

As it turned out, the Londoners who had staked their money on the faith that he would be hanged, lost it; for, in January, 1776, instead of gracing a halter at Tyburn, he was, with other prisoners, put on board an English frigate, and was thus started again upon his long and painful wanderings over land and sea, being now in the harbor of Cape Fear, and now in New York, now in Halifax, and now

[1] "Narrative," etc. 48.

[2] Ibid. 46–47.

again in New York. There, at last, in October, 1776, he was permitted to go out upon parole, within the limits of the city: "I soon projected means to live in some measure agreeably to my rank, though I was destitute of cash. My constitution was almost worn out by such a long and barbarous captivity. The enemy gave out that I was crazy and wholly unmanned; but my vitals held sound, nor was I delirious any more than I had been from my youth up; but my extreme circumstances, at certain times, rendered it politic to act in some measure the mad man."[1]

Coming thus to the headquarters of the enemy in the midst of their great successes upon Long Island, in New York City, and elsewhere in that neighborhood, he was able to speak as an eye-witness of the sufferings of the American prisoners there, and to bear some testimony well fitted to kindle the sympathy and the undying wrath of his fellow-countrymen: "I next invite the reader to a retrospective sight and consideration of the doleful scene of inhumanity exercised by General Sir William Howe, and the army under his command, towards the prisoners taken on Long Island on the 27th day of August, 1776; sundry of whom were in an inhuman and barbarous manner murdered after they had surrendered their arms :—particularly a General Odel, or Woodhull, of the militia, who was hacked to pieces with cutlasses, when alive, by the light horsemen; and a Captain Fellows, of the continental army, who was thrust through with a bayonet, of which wound he died instantly. Sundry others were hanged up by the neck till they were dead,—five on the limb of a white-oak tree, and without any reason assigned, except that they were fighting for the only blessing worth preserving. And, indeed, those who had the misfortune to fall into their hands at Fort Washington, in the month of November following, met with but little better usage, except that they were reserved from immediate death, to famish and die with hunger. In fine, the word 'rebel,' applied to any vanquished persons, without regard

[1] "Narrative," etc. 77.

to rank, who were in the continental service on the 27th of August aforesaid, was thought by the enemy sufficient to sanctify whatever cruelties they were pleased to inflict, death itself not excepted."[1] "The private soldiers who were brought to New York, were crowded into churches, and environed with slavish Hessian guards, a people of a strange language, who were sent to America for no other design but cruelty and desolation; and, at others, by merciless Britons, whose mode of communicating ideas being intelligible in this country, served only to tantalize and insult the helpless and perishing; but above all, the hellish delight and triumph of the Tories over them, as they were dying by hundreds. This was too much for me to bear as a spectator; for I saw the Tories exulting over the dead bodies of their murdered countrymen. I have gone into the churches and seen sundry of the prisoners in the agonies of death, in consequence of very hunger, and others speechless, and very near death, biting pieces of chips; others pleading, for God's sake, for something to eat, and at the same time shivering with cold. Hollow groans saluted my ears, and despair seemed to be imprinted on every of their countenances. The filth in these churches . . . was almost beyond description. . . . I have seen in one of these churches seven dead at the same time, lying among the excrements of their bodies. . . . The provision dealt out to the prisoners was by no means sufficient for the support of life. . . . I saw some of them sucking bones after they were speechless; others, who could yet speak and had the use of their reason, urged me in the strongest and most pathetic manner, to use my interest in their behalf."[2]

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[1] "Narrative," etc. 78–79.

[2] Ibid. 79–81. A good example of Ethan Allen's power in robust controversy may be seen in a little book of his published in 1779,—"A Vindication of the Opposition of Vermont to the Government of New York." As a controversial writer whose rage in assertion was unchastened either by adequate knowledge, or by any suspicion of his lack of it, his reputation, doubtless, rests on a work published in 1784, under this entirely characteristic title:—"Reason the Only Oracle of Man; or, A Compendious System of Natural Religion.

II.

Another authentic and very stirring specimen of this sort of prison-literature, is "A Narrative of the Capture and Treatment of John Dodge, by the English at Detroit," written by Dodge himself and published at Philadelphia in 1779. The author, a native of Connecticut, had settled as an Indian trader at Sandusky in 1770; had acquired much facility in the Indian dialects thereabout, and much influence over the Indians themselves; and having, on account of his stanch and too competent Americanism, become an object of suspicion to the English officers in that region, had been pounced upon by them and thrown for safe-keeping into their prison-den at Detroit, where the most barbarous treatment awaited him, and where he was in constant peril of murder. Of all these ugly doings and sufferings, this little book tells the story, and it does so with graphic simplicity and after the manner of a man who is speaking the truth.

III.

Perhaps all American prisoners at Montreal, or Dartmoor, at Halifax, or Detroit, had some right to deem themselves the very children of good luck, by comparison with any of their countrymen in captivity who chanced to form an acquaintance with the inside of the British prison-ships in the harbor of New York. Of these prison-ships was born a very considerable literature,—a literature in itself most pathetic and implacable,—the literature of a realm shut away apparently from the pity of God or man and given over to be the very dwelling-place of rage and brutality, of filth, foul air, hunger, thirst, pestilence, blasphemy, madness.

No better example of such naïve chronicles can be chosen, than "The Old Jersey Captive, or, a Narrative of the Cap-

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Alternately adorned with Confutations of a Variety of Doctrines incompatible with it; Deduced from the most exalted Ideas which we are able to form of the Divine and Human Characters, and from the Universe in General."

tivity of Thomas Andros, . . . on Board the Old Jersey Prison-Ship at New York, 1781." At the breaking out of hostilities in 1775, Thomas Andros was but a lad of sixteen, laboring on a farm near Plainfield in Connecticut, his mother being then a widow and in much poverty. As the news from Lexington and Concord passed that way, this boy enlisted as a soldier, and thereafter served in several campaigns. In 1781, having taken employment on board an American privateer, and being one of a crew put in charge of a prize-vessel which they were to carry into port, he and all his mates were captured by the enemy on the 27th of August, 1781, were taken to New York, and were there cast into that floating prison, the ship "Old Jersey," around which are gathered so many baleful memories of the Revolution. "This was," writes Andros, "an old sixty-four gun ship, which through age had become unfit for further actual service. She was stripped of every spar and all her rigging, . . . and nothing remained but an old, unsightly, rotten hulk. Her dark and filthy external appearance perfectly corresponded with the death and despair that reigned within. . . . She was moored about three quarters of a mile to the eastward of Brooklyn ferry near a tide-mill on the Long Island shore. The nearest distance to land was about twenty rods. And doubtless no other ship in the British navy ever proved the means of the destruction of so many human beings. It is computed that not less than eleven thousand American seamen perished in her. But after it was known that it was next to certain death to confine a prisoner here the inhumanity and wickedness of doing it was about the same as if he had been taken into the city and deliberately shot on some public square. But as if mercy had fled from the earth, here we were doomed to dwell. And never while I was on board, did any Howard or angel of pity appear to inquire into or alleviate our woes. Once or twice, by the order of a stranger on the quarter deck, a bag of apples were hurled promiscuously into the midst of hundreds of prisoners crowded

together as thick as they could stand, and life and limbs were endangered by the scramble. This, instead of compassion, was a cruel sport. When I saw it about to commence, I fled to the most distant part of the ship.

"On the commencement of the first evening, we were driven down to darkness between decks, secured by iron gratings and an armed soldiery. And now a scene of horror which baffles all description presented itself. On every side wretched, desponding shapes of men could be seen. Around the well room an armed guard were forcing up the prisoners to the winches, to clear the ship of water and prevent her sinking, and little else could be heard but a roar of mutual execrations, reproaches, and insults. During this operation, there was a small dim light admitted below, but it served to make darkness more visible, and horror more terrific. In my reflections I said this must be a complete image and anticipation of hell. Milton's description of the dark world rushed upon my mind—

> 'Sights of woe, regions of sorrow, doleful
> Shades where peace and rest can never dwell.'

". . . . When I first became an inmate of this abode of suffering, despair, and death, there were about four hundred prisoners on board, but in a short time they amounted to twelve hundred. And in proportion to our numbers, the mortality increased. All the most deadly diseases were pressed into the service of the king of terrors, but his prime ministers were dysentery, small pox, and yellow fever. . . . The diseased and the healthy were mingled together in the main ship. In a short time, we had two hundred or more, sick and dying, lodged in the fore part of the lower gun-deck, where all the prisoners were confined at night. Utter derangement was a common symptom of yellow fever; and to increase the horror of the darkness that shrouded us (for we were allowed no light betwixt decks) the voice of warning would be heard—'Take heed to

yourselves,—there is a mad man stalking through the ship with a knife in his hand.' . . . While so many were sick with raging fever, there was a loud cry for water, but none could be had except on the upper deck, and but one allowed to ascend at a time. The suffering then from the rage of thirst during the night was very great. Nor was it at all times safe to attempt to go up. Provoked by the continual cry for leave to ascend, when there was already one on deck, the sentry would push them back with his bayonet. . . . In the morning the hatchways were thrown open and we were allowed to ascend all at once, and remain on the upper deck during the day. But the first object that met our view in the morning, was a most appalling spectacle,—a boat loaded with dead bodies, conveying them to the Long Island shore, where they were very slightly covered with sand. . . . Let our disease be what it would, we were abandoned to our fate. . . . No English physician, or any one from the city, ever, to my knowledge, came near us. . . . The prisoners were furnished with buckets and brushes to cleanse the ship, and with vinegar to sprinkle her inside. But their indolence and despair were such that they would not use them, or but rarely. And, indeed, at this time the encouragement to do it was small. For the whole ship, from keel to the taffarel, was equally affected, and contained pestilence sufficient to desolate a world : disease and death were wrought into her very timbers. At the time I left, it is to be presumed a more filthy, contagious, and deadly abode for human beings, never existed among a Christianized people. It fell but little short of the Black Hole at Calcutta. . . . The lower hold and the orlop deck were such a terror, that no man would venture down into them. Humanity would have dictated a more merciful treatment to a band of pirates. . . . But in the view of the English, we were rebels and traitors: we had risen against the mother country in an unjust and wanton civil war. On this ground, they considered us as not entitled to that humanity which might

be expected by prisoners taken in a war with a foreign nation. . . . As to religion, I do not remember of beholding any trace of it in the ship. I saw no Bible—heard no prayer, no religious conversation; no clergyman visited us, though no set of afflicted and dying men more needed the light and consolations of religion. . . . I know not that God's name was ever mentioned, unless it was in profaneness and blasphemy. . . . I wish it to be understood that what I have said of this horrid prison, relates almost exclusively to the time I was on board. Of what took place before or afterward, I say little. . . . Nor would I heap the cruel horrors of this prison-ship as a reproach upon the whole nation without exception. It is indeed a blot which a thousand ages cannot eradicate from the name of Britain; but no doubt, when the pious and humane among them came to know what had been done, they utterly reprobated such cruelty." [1]

IV.

A piece of writing having such worth and charm as to entitle it to far greater fame than it has yet had, is "A Narrative of the Capture of Henry Laurens, of His Confinement in the Tower of London, and So Forth, 1780, 1781, 1782," [2]—this being the story of a very considerable international incident as told by the principal actor and sufferer

[1] "The Old Jersey Captive," 8–20. The most thrilling part of this strong narrative is that which tells the story of its writer's escape. After marvels of suffering and adventure, the poor fellow at last got home to his mother near Plainfield, where he lay dangerously ill a long time; and then, as an offering of conscience and gratitude, he devoted himself to the sacred ministry—a service for which he fitted himself under great disadvantages, and in which he achieved a long and beneficent career, dying at the age of eighty-six in the town of Berkeley where he had lived as minister for seven-and-fifty years. Interesting accounts of this extraordinary person are to be seen in Enoch Sanford's "History of the Town of Berkeley," 9–27; and in S. H. Emery's "Ministry of Taunton," ii. 254–277. In a note to page 262 of the latter work is a good, though not complete, list of Andros's many published sermons and other writings.

[2] "Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society," i. 18–68.

in it, and told with simplicity, sprightliness, and grace, also with a sureness of intellectual movement born of the splendid sincerity, virility, wholesomeness, and competence of this man—himself the noblest Roman of them all—the unsurpassed embodiment of the proudest, finest, wittiest, most efficient, and most chivalrous Americanism of his time.

Henry Laurens was of Huguenot ancestry, and was born in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1723. Early in life he was placed in a counting-house in his native town; afterward he was transferred to a similar position in London, where he remained several years. Returning to Charleston, he engaged in business on his own account and met with extraordinary success; he became one of the merchant-princes of his country, the possessor, also, of large wealth in lands and in slaves.[1] Prior to the final asperities of the Revolution, he had begun to take a high-spirited part in the affairs of his own colony,—even serving in a campaign against the Cherokees. In 1771, he retired from business, and went abroad for travel and for the education of his children. In 1774, being in London, he was one of the thirty-eight Americans who there signed a petition intended, if possible, to dissuade parliament from entering upon the harsh colonial policy embodied in the Boston port bill. With the final failure of that honest American effort to save the mother country from a fatal misjudgment of her American children, Henry Laurens came back to his own land to take his full share in whatsoever fate might be in

[1] Yet he had an abhorrence of slave-holding; and one of the noblest passages in early anti-slavery literature is that portion of a letter which was written by him at Charleston, August 14, 1776, informing his eldest son, the gallant John Laurens, of his purpose, at whatever cost, to emancipate his slaves. "Correspondence of Henry Laurens," 19–21. This is the first volume of "Materials for History Printed from Original Manuscripts," and edited by Frank Moore, for the Zenger Club. No subsequent volume was ever issued. In 1861—at a time when the anti-slavery testimony of this illustrious South Carolinian had a singular pertinence—his letter of August, 1776, was separately reprinted, under the title of "A Protest against Slavery."

store for it. Being elected to the first provincial congress of South Carolina in 1775, he drew up the form of association to be signed by all citizens of that colony who were resolute in their opposition to ministerial encroachments. Of the council of safety—a revolutionary body of almost unlimited power—he became president. In 1776, he was made vice-president of the new State of South Carolina. In 1777, he was made a member of the Continental Congress.[1] Coming at last upon the arena of national politics, he was soon recognized for what he was—a trusty, sagacious, lofty, imperturbable character—a man whom Washington could love and lean upon; of whom even the bitterest of the Loyalists had to speak with admiration and forbearance. Soon after the retirement of John Hancock from the presidency of Congress, Henry Laurens was made president in his place, and served as such from the first of November, 1777, until the ninth of December, 1778. In the latter part of the year 1779, he was chosen by Congress as its commissioner to negotiate a treaty of amity and commerce with Holland, and to procure a loan in that country.[2] For the performance of this high duty, he set sail from Philadelphia, August 13, 1780, in the brigantine, "Mercury"—a packet belonging to Congress; and on the third of September, the "Mercury" with all on board was captured by Captain Keppel of the British frigate, "Vestal." Near the end of that month, Laurens arrived in England as a prisoner of state and was sent to the Tower. There he remained "closely confined and inhumanly treated"[3] for about fifteen months, being finally let out on bail, and subsequently set free in exchange for Lord Cornwallis. In the latter part of his incarceration, a British surgeon remarked to the prisoner as he lay ill in bed, that "it was very difficult to put a man to death in

[1] Elected 10 Jan., 1777. He took his seat 22 July. "Journals of the American Congress," ii. 44, 202.

[2] "Secret Journals of Congress," ii. 282–318; especially for Oct. 21, 26, 30; Nov. 1, 5, 8, 1779; and for June 20, 1780.

[3] "A Narrative," etc. 57.

this country." "There is, however, in this country," said Laurens in reply, "a facility in murdering a man by inches: I have experienced it in a degree not to be paralleled in modern British history." [1]

All this hard experience of his as a prisoner of state in the hands of the British, was borne by him not only with fortitude, but with gayety, and with a quick discomfiture of all devices for his intimidation or corruption. Such experience, also, furnished the subject and the materials for his "Narrative," [2]—a modest and fascinating story of an heroic episode in the history of the Revolution, a fragment of autobiography fit to become a classic in the literature of a people ready to pay homage to whatever is magnanimous, exquisite, and indomitable in the manly character.

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[1] "A Narrative," etc. 56.

[2] In "Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society," i. 69–83, at the end of the "Narrative," is given an "Appendix, containing Documents, Letters, etc., relating to Mr. Laurens's Imprisonment in the Tower." In "The Magazine of American History" for December, 1884, may be seen a rebus letter written by Laurens to Lord George Gordon, whom he knew as a fellow-prisoner in the Tower.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

PHILIP FRENEAU AS POET AND SATIRIST IN THE WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE: 1778–1783.

I.—Two periods of Freneau's activity in immediate contact with the Revolution—The first period embraces the latter half of the year 1775—The second period extends from 1778 to 1783—Freneau's abandonment of the country in 1776 and his stay in the West Indies till 1778—His poetic work there—Denounces slavery.

II.—His return to his country, and to literary activity in its service, in 1778—His confidence in the success of the Revolution—"Stanzas on the New American Frigate 'Alliance'"—"America Independent"—Fierce onslaughts upon King George the Third—His invectives against Burgoyne and the American Loyalists.

III.—His poem "To the Dog Sancho."

IV.—His contributions to "The United States Magazine" in 1779—Two more attacks on the King.

V.—His capture and imprisonment by the British—He is stimulated thereby to new and fiercer satires against the enemy—"The British Prison Ship."

VI.—His principal poems for the years 1781, 1782, and 1783.

VII.—"The Political Balance; or, The Fates of Britain and America Compared."

VIII.—"The Prophecy."

IX.—His final word to the British King.

X.—Freneau's proper rank as a poet—A pioneer in the reform of eighteenth-century English verse—The first American poet of Democracy, and his fidelity to that character.

I.

THE work of Philip Freneau as poet and satirist in direct contact with the American Revolution, was broken into two periods,—these periods being separated from each other by an interval of about two years. The first period, which has been dealt with in a former part of this work,[1] embraces those months of the year 1775 wherein his own fierce pas-

[1] See chapter ix.

sions, like the passions of his countrymen, were set aflame by the outbreak of hostilities. Thereafter occurred a mysterious lapse in his activity as a writer on themes connected with the great struggle, to which he had professed his undying devotion;—he was absent from the country until some time in the year 1778. With the middle of the year 1778 began the second period of his work as Revolutionary poet and satirist, and it did not come to an end, except with the end of the Revolution itself. If we are right in assigning to the later months of the year 1775 Freneau's "MacSwiggen, a Satire," we shall find in that poem some clew to the mood of literary disgust and discouragement which seems then to have seized him, impelling him for a time to leave his native land:

> "Long have I sat on this disastrous shore,
> And, sighing, sought to gain a passage o'er
> To Europe's towns, where, as our travellers say,
> Poets may flourish—or perhaps they may." [1]

Not to Europe, however, did the down-hearted political prophet make his escape,—the Tarshish to which he fled was in the West Indies:

> "Sick of all feuds, to Reason I appeal
> From wars of paper, and from wars of steel;
> Let others here their hopes and wishes end,
> I to the sea with weary steps descend;
> . . . . . .
> In distant isles some happier scene I 'll choose,
> And court in softer shades the unwilling Muse." [2]

This resolution, which seems weak-spirited enough and wholly unworthy of him, Freneau carried out, sailing away to the tropics some time in the year 1776, and remaining there, probably, during the remainder of that year, and the

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[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 83.

[2] Ibid. 87–88.

year 1777, and even a part of the year 1778. Then it was that he wrote some of his longest and most powerful non-political poems,—"The House of Night,"[1] "The Beauties of Santa Cruz,"[2] and "The Jamaica Funeral,"[3]—the latter notable for one passage of scorching satire on the frivolity and sensuality then so often to be met with in the clergy of the colonial Church. Even in his remoteness from the scene of his country's danger and anguish, he could not forget either that anguish or that danger; and his fine little poem "On the Death of Captain Nicholas Biddle, Commander of the 'Randolph' Frigate," is some token of Freneau's continued remembrance of the cause of his countrymen—whom, however, he seemed to have abandoned. There is one stanza of this poem over which the reader will be tempted to linger as having a weird beauty, a sort of spectral suggestiveness, quite characteristic of Freneau in his nobler work. Referring to the American ship, which had been blown up and sunk in the very moment of its victory over the British cruiser, he says:

> "The 'Randolph' soon on Stygian streams
> Shall coast along the land of dreams,
> The islands of the dead!
> But fate, that parts them on the deep,
> Shall save the Briton, still to weep
> His ancient honors fled."[4]

Even his long poem, "The Beauties of Santa Cruz," wherein he tries to give himself up to the delights of tropical nature, is not without some touch revealing his sorrowful consciousness of the disasters which, in the summer and autumn of that year, 1776, were overwhelming his native land:

> "Far o'er the waste of yonder surgy field
> My native climes in fancied prospect lie,

[1] "Poems of Philip Freneau," 88–108.
[2] Ibid. 117–133.
[3] Ibid. 109–117.
[4] Ibid. 147.

Now hid in shades, and now by clouds concealed,
And now by tempests ravished from my eye.

"There, triumphs to enjoy, are Britain, thine,
There thy proud navy awes the pillaged shore;
Nor sees the day when nations shall combine
That pride to humble, and our rights restore."[1]

Perhaps it was in mere disgust, perhaps it was in anger and despair, that the poet had been able to persuade himself to leave behind him what he calls the "bloody plains" and the "iron glooms" of his country, and, as he says,

"Quit the cold northern star, and here enjoy
Beneath the smiling skies, this land of love";[2]

yet even in that "land of love" his heart was soon embittered by sights and sounds of hate,—sights and sounds which seemed to transform that paradise into a pandemonium:

"If there exists a hell—the case is clear—
Sir Toby's slaves enjoy that portion here.
. . . . . .
Here whips on whips excite a thousand fears,
And mingled howlings vibrate on my ears:
Here nature's plagues abound, of all degrees,
Snakes, scorpions, despots, lizards, centipees."[3]

Chiefly, the ineffable horrors of slavery in the West Indies gave to this poet of liberty such sorrow as made it impossible for him there to enter without reserve into the mere enjoyment of nature. In a bit of noble prose with which, three years afterward, he prefaced his poem on "The Beauties of Santa Cruz," he said: "The only disagreeable circumstance attending this island, which it has in common

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 131. [2] Ibid.
[3] "Poems on Several Occasions," 391.

with the rest, is the cruel and detestable slavery of the negroes. . . . No class of mankind in the known world undergo so complete a servitude as the common negroes in the West Indies. It casts a shade over the native charms of the country; it blots out the beauties of the eternal spring which Providence has there ordained to reign; and amidst all the profusion of bounties which nature has scattered,—the brightness of the heaven, the mildness of the air, and the luxuriancy of the vegetable kingdom,—it leaves me melancholy and disconsolate, convinced that there is no pleasure in this world without its share of pain. And thus the earth, which, were it not for the lust of pride and dominion, might be an earthly paradise, is, by the ambition and overbearing nature of mankind, rendered an eternal scene of desolation, woe, and horror: the weak goes to the wall, while the strong prevails ; and after our ambitious frenzy has turned the world upside down, we are contented with a narrow spot, and leave our follies and cruelties to be acted over again by every succeeding generation." [1]

II.

Even though lacking other biographical data, we can find in Freneau's verse sufficient evidence that he was at home again by the middle of the year 1778,—his return to his native land having been signalized by his return to the most vigorous literary activity in its service:

" Returned a prisoner to my native shore,
How changed I find those scenes that pleased before !
How changed those groves where fancy loved to stray,
When spring's young blossoms bloomed along the way.
From every eye distils the frequent tear,
From every mouth the doleful tale I hear !
Some mourn a father, brother, husband, friend ;
Some mourn, imprisoned in their native land,

[1] First printed in " The United States Magazine," 1779. These sentences are given in " Poems relating to the American Revolution by Philip Freneau, with an Introductory Memoir by Evert A. Duyckinck," xiii–xiv.

In sickly ships what numerous hosts confined—
At once their lives and liberties resigned!"[1]

Notwithstanding this tone of sadness over the havoc wrought by the war, there rings through the three or four poems which he wrote during the latter half of the year 1778, a note of absolute confidence—of exultant and even of jeering confidence—in the success of the American cause, all to be accomplished through American capacity and valor backed by the aid of France. It is to the one great event of this year, the French alliance—to the king and the people of France, our old foes, our new friends—that he now pays many a jubilant and grateful tribute. Perhaps no finer expression of this new note of exultation is to be met with, than in his "Stanzas on the new American Frigate 'Alliance,'" wherein he represents Neptune as looking abroad over his watery dominions toward the west, and with such surprise as a god may be capable of, seeing there a mighty war-ship that was altogether new to him:

"As nearer still the monarch drew,—
Her starry flag displayed to view,—
He asked a Triton of his train,
'What flag was this that rode the main?—

"'A ship of such a gallant mien
This many a day I have not seen;
To no mean power can she belong,
So swift, so warlike, stout, and strong!'"[2]

In reply to this enquiry of the sea-god, the Triton proceeds to give Neptune some valuable information about the latest phases of mundane politics,—explaining, especially, that this ship belongs to a new nation which had just been formed in the far West, and which, in resentment for wrongs inflicted by Britain, is now victoriously confronting that arrogant power even on the sea—on the sea where

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 141. [2] Ibid. 144.

Britain has been accustomed to think of itself as without a rival. In the last stanza, this admirable Triton manages to compress the neatest possible compliment to the spirit of the people who have sent forth this fine ship. Apostrophizing the most famous vessel of antiquity, he exclaims:

> "Not, Argo, in thy womb was found
> Such hearts of brass as here abound:
> They for their golden fleece did fly—
> These sail to vanquish tyranny."[1]

The poet's assurance of the success of the American cause breathes a sort of ferocious exultation through the longest and strongest of the poems produced by him in 1778,— "America Independent, and Her Everlasting Deliverance from British Tyranny and Oppression:"

> "'T is done! and Britain for her madness sighs!
> Take warning tyrants, and henceforth be wise:
> If o'er mankind man gives you legal sway,
> Take not the rights of human kind away.
> When God from chaos gave this world to be,
> Man then he formed, and formed him to be free;
> In his own image stampt the favorite race—
> How dar'st thou, tyrant, the fair stamp deface?"[2]

Thus assuming that the contest was then entirely over and the British already expelled from the land, he proceeds to doom them at once to infamy and to insignificance among the peoples of the earth:

> "This be their doom, in vengeance for the slain,
> To pass their days in poverty and pain;
> . . . . . .
> And to their insect isle henceforth confined,
> No longer lord it o'er the human kind."[3]

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[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 146.
[2] Ibid. 134–135.
[3] Ibid. 135.

According to this poet, nothing good can be said for kings in general, even in spite of the fact that both Solomon and David belonged to that order of men; for,

> "Though one was wise, and one Goliath slew,
> Kings are the choicest curse that man e'er knew."[1]

But for George the Third of Britain it was left to exhibit to the world to what extremes of hypocrisy, tyranny, and stupidity even a king might attain:

> "In him we see the depths of baseness joined—
> Whate'er disgraced the dregs of human kind;
> Cain, Nimrod, Nero—fiends in human guise—
> Herod, Domitian—these in judgment rise;
> And, envious of his deeds, I hear them say,
> None but a George could be more vile than they.
> . . . . . .
> Yet he to arms, and war, and blood, inclined,
> A fair-day warrior with a feeble mind,
> Fearless, while others meet the shock of fate,
> And dare that death which clips his thread too late,—
> He to the fane—O hypocrite!—would go
> While not an angel there but was his foe;
> There did he kneel, and sigh, and sob, and pray—
> Yet not to lave his thousand sins away.
> Far other motives swayed his spotted soul;
> 'T was not for those the secret sorrow stole
> Down his pale cheek—'t was vengeance and despair
> Dissolved his eye, and planted sorrow there!
> How could he hope to bribe the impartial sky
> By his base prayers, and mean hypocrisy?
> . . . . . .
> What were his prayers?—his prayers could be no more
> Than a thief's wishes to recruit his store!"[2]

Possibly, however, the bitterest invective contained in this most bitter poem, is in the passages which are devoted

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 136.

[2] Ibid. 136–137.

to Burgoyne, and especially, as in the following lines, to the poet's own countrymen, the Tories:

"So vile a crew the world ne'er saw before,
And, grant, ye pitying heavens, it may no more!
If ghosts from hell infest our poisoned air,
Those ghosts have entered these base bodies here.
Murder and blood is still their dear delight—
Scream round their roofs, ye ravens of the night!
Whene'er they wed, may demons and despair
And grief and woe and blackest night be there;
Fiends leagued from hell the nuptial lamp display,
Swift to perdition light them on their way,
Round the wide world their devilish squadrons chase—
To find no realm that grants one resting place."[1]

But though these people, driven out from America, are to find in all the world no real resting-place, there is, the poet tells us, at least one spot of earth sufficiently hideous and desolate to be their proper place of abode. Perhaps the very climax of Freneau's power, both in description and in execration, is reached in the passage wherein he assigns to Burgoyne and to the American Tories their future earthly home:

"Far to the north, on Scotland's utmost end,
An isle there lies, the haunt of every fiend;
There screeching owls and screaming vultures rest,
And not a tree adorns its barren breast.
No sheperds there attend their bleating flocks,
But withered witches rove among the rocks;
Shrouded in ice, the blasted mountains show
Their cloven heads, to fright the seas below;
The lamp of heaven in his diurnal race
Here scarcely deigns to unveil his radiant face,
Or if one day he circling treads the sky,
He views this island with an angry eye;

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 139.

Or ambient fogs their broad moist wings expand,
Damp his bright ray, and cloud the infernal land ;
The blackening wind, incessant storms prolong,
Dull as their night, and dreary as my song.
When stormy winds with rain refuse to blow,
Then from the dark sky drives the unpitying snow ;
When drifting snows from iron clouds forbear,
Then down the hailstones rattle through the air ;
No peace, no rest, the elements bestow,
But seas forever rage, and storms forever blow.

" Here, miscreants, here with Loyal hearts retire,
Here pitch your tents, and kindle here your fire ;
Here desert nature will her stings display,
And fiercest hunger on your vitals prey ;
And with yourselves let John Burgoyne retire
To reign the monarch whom your hearts admire ! "[1]

III.

From these savageries of satire, it is a relief to turn for a moment to a playful and gracious little poem—also a product of the year 1778—a poem in which Freneau, while still not forgetful of the vices which make so many human beings detestable to him, shews both admiration and tenderness for the virtues which adorn the dog—that humble and faithful friend of man. In the circumstances that gave occasion for his poem " To the Dog Sancho," one gets some glimpse of the lawlessness and violence which the barbarities of war had by that time made rampant among us, especially on the outer edges of our civilization. Sometime in that year, 1778, a lonely cabin occupied by Freneau, near the Neversink Hills in New Jersey, was attacked at midnight by robbers, who came armed with a musket and a cutlass, which they used with almost fatal effect on poor Sancho, he having courageously challenged their right to be there. The easy and playful movement of this poem well suits its humanity

[1] " The Poems of Philip Freneau," 139-140.

of tone,—the affability, in fact, of the poet's ways toward a companion so truly loved and respected by him:

"The world, my dear Sancho, is full of distress,
And you have your share, I allow and confess;
For twice with a musket, and now a cutteau—
You had nearly gone off to dog-heaven below.

"Was this your reward, to be slashed, to be cut,
For defending at midnight the door of a hut?
You had little to fight for, had little to win,
Yet you boldly held out, till the robbers broke in.

"The blade which was meant the bold robber to face,
To guard a fair lady, or serve in the chase,
Was drenched in the blood of an innocent cur,
Who said in dog language, 'What want you, good Sir?'

"Poor fellow, I pity your pitiful case!
In fact they have ruined the round of your face;
And die when you will, be it early or late,
You will go to your grave with a scar on your pate.

"If ever a dog be permitted to pass
Where folks I could mention, have fixed on a place,
(But which, I suspect, they will hardly attain
While rights of pre-emption in Satan remain.)

"Good Sancho had merit to put in his plea,
And claim with the claimants a portion in fee,
On the ground, that in life he was one of the few
Who, in watching and barking, were trusty and true.

"To warn us of danger, he ventured his beef,
And, in his own lingo, cried—'Robber and Thief!'
So now, in return for the good he has done,
For the vigils he kept, and the battles he won,

"I 'll give him a verse with the great of the age,
And if he quite dies, he must die in my page;
And long may he live in despite of the mob,
And the fools who his master, a poet, would rob!

"Wherever I take up my evening retreat,
Dear Sancho, I 'll have you to lie at my feet;
And whether at home or in regions remote,
For a bed, I 'll allot you the skirt of a coat.

"With my dog at my feet, and my gun at my head,
I am equally safe in a fort or a shed;
From a snap of his teeth and the shot of a gun,
Thrice happy the thief that is able to run!"[1]

IV.

For the year 1779, Freneau's most characteristic work found expression in the pages of "The United States Magazine," of which his classmate, Brackenridge, was the editor, and to which he contributed much both in prose and verse, particularly two of the long poems written by him during his recent abode in the West Indies.[2] There, also, appeared his two satires on the ever-enticing topic of King George the Third: "A Dialogue between his Britannic Majesty and Mr. Fox, supposed to have passed about the time of the approach of the combined fleets of France and Spain to the British coasts, August, 1779";[3] and "George the Third His Soliloquy for 1779."[4] In both of these satires, the king is made to bewail with grotesque frankness the desperate plight into which he has fallen through his zeal to suppress the spirit of liberty in America:

[1] Freneau, "Poems Written and Published during the Revolutionary War," i., 260–261.

[2] Paul Leicester Ford, "Check-List of American Magazines printed in the Eighteenth Century," 7; Albert H. Smyth, "The Philadelphia Magazines and their Contributors 1741–1850," 60–61; Evert A. Duyckinck, in "Introductory Memoir" to Freneau's "Poems relating to the American Revolution," xii.–xv.

[3] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 156–164. [4] Ibid. 151–153.

"France aids them now, a desperate game I play,
And hostile Spain will do the same, they say.
My armies vanquished and my heroes fled,
My people murmuring, and my commerce dead,
My shattered navy pelted, bruised, and clubbed,
By Dutchmen bullied and by Frenchmen drubbed,
My name abhorred, my nation in disgrace,
How should I act in such a mournful case!
My hopes and joys are vanished with my coin,
My ruined army, and my lost Burgoyne!"[1]

V.

It is possible that the discontinuance of "The United States Magazine," which occurred with the close of the year 1779, may have left Freneau without definite literary employment; and for this reason or some other he resolved to leave the country once more, setting sail early in 1780 upon a voyage from Philadelphia to St. Eustacia. The voyage was both a brief and a disastrous one. While just off the Capes of the Delaware, the ship was captured by a British cruiser and was carried to New York. Then it was that the poet entered upon the most tragic and the most deplorable experience of his life—an experience of personal indignity and suffering as a prisoner in the hands of the enemy—an experience which had the natural effect of stimulating to almost inconceivable proportions his hatred of them, and thus of qualifying him to write the most energetic and the most envenomed of all his satires. Though but a passenger on the captured vessel, he was thrown into one of those celebrated prison-ships which then lay in New York harbor,—a loathsome hulk called the "Scorpion," where, by reason of the combined horrors of foul air, foul food, foul water, and foul treatment, he soon fell violently ill of a fever,—in consequence of which he was transferred to a so-called hospital ship, the "Hunter." This change of place proved to be but a change of miseries—not an amelioration

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 152.

of them. After a time, he succeeded in making his escape from these floating hells; and then, without waiting to regain his bodily strength, but using the strength of his great wrath, he addressed himself to the work of vengeance by writing, before the close of the year 1780, his most savage satire, "The British Prison-Ship,"—a satire actually writhing and scorching with a hatred which no one will be likely to consider as either artificial or feigned:

"The various horrors of these hulks to tell,—
These Prison Ships where pain and horror dwell,
Where Death in tenfold vengeance holds his reign,
And injured ghosts, yet unavenged, complain,—
This be my task! Ungenerous Britons, you
Conspire to murder those you can't subdue!

"Weak as I am, I 'll try my strength to-day,
And my best arrows at these hell-hounds play;
To future years one scene of death prolong,
And hang them up to infamy, in song!"[1]

As originally published, in 1781, the poem was in four cantos, afterward recast into three. Of these, the least effective is the first, which tells the story of his capture. It is in the second and third cantos, wherein he describes the horrors of the prison-ship and of the hospital, that he finds his supreme opportunity for satire and invective:

"Remembrance shudders at this scene of fears:
Still in my view some English brute appears—
Some base-born Hessian slave walks threat'ning by—
Some servile Scot, with murder in his eye,
Still haunts my sight, as vainly they bemoan
Rebellions managed so unlike their own!

"Oh may I never feel the poignant pain,
To live subjected to such fiends again,—
Stewards and mates that hostile Britain bore,

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 170–171.

Cut from the gallows on their native shore;
Their ghastly looks and vengeance-beaming eyes
Still to my view in dismal colors rise.
Oh may I ne'er review these dire abodes,
These piles for slaughter, floating on the floods!
And you that o'er the troubled ocean go,
Strike not your standards to this miscreant foe.
Better the greedy wave should swallow all,
Better to meet the death-conducted ball,
Better to sleep on ocean's deepest bed,
At once destroyed and numbered with the dead,
Than thus to perish in the face of day—
Where twice ten-thousand deaths one death repay.

. . . . . .

Hunger and thirst to work our woe combine,
And mouldy bread, and flesh of rotten swine,
The mangled carcase, and the battered brain,
The doctor's poison, and the captain's cane,
The soldier's musket, and the steward's debt,
The evening shackle, and the noon-day threat!" [1]

One of the most harrowing passages of the poem is that in which he tells how, at the close of every day, they were driven from the hot and crowded decks down into the hold —still hotter and still more crowded:

"Swift from the guarded decks we rushed along,
And vainly sought repose—so vast our throng.
Three hundred wretches here, denied all light,
In crowded mansions pass the infernal night;
Some for a bed their tattered vestments join,
And some on chests, and some on floors recline.
Shut from the blessings of the evening air,
Pensive we lay with mangled corpses there;
Meagre and wan, and scorched with heat, below,
We loomed like ghosts, ere death had made us so!" [2]

It is, however, in individual portraiture—it is in the tributes of choice and vitriolic execration which he pays to three or

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 172–173, 175. [2] Ibid. 173.

four of the officers whom he had the unhappiness to encounter on board these horrid ships—that the power of this artist is best shewn. One of these detested men was the mate of the "Hunter,"—

"That wretch who, banished from the navy crew,
Grown old in blood, did here his trade renew.
His serpent's tongue, when on his charge let loose,
Uttered reproaches, scandal, and abuse,
Gave all to hell who dared his king disown,
And swore mankind were made for George alone.
Ten thousand times, to irritate our woe,
He wished us foundered in the gulph below;
Ten-thousand times he brandished high his stick,
And swore, as often, that we were not sick—
And yet so pale! that we were thought by some
A freight of ghosts from Death's dominion come."[1]

Another creature on whom the poet here bestows his attentions is a Hessian doctor, the assistant-surgeon of the hospital ship:

"Fair Science never called the wretch her son,
And Art disdained the stupid man to own;
. . . . . .
Yet still he doomed his genius to the rack,
And, as you may suppose, was owned a quack!
He on his charge the healing work begun
With antimonial mixtures— by the tun;
Ten minutes was the time he deigned to stay,—
The time of grace allotted once a day,—
He drenched us well with bitter draughts, 't is true,
Nostrums from Hell, and cortex from Peru;
Some with his pills he sent to Pluto's reign,
And some he blistered with his flies of Spain;
His Cream of Tartar walked its deadly round,
Till the lean patient at the potion frowned,
And swore that hemlock, death, or what you will,
Were nonsense to the drugs that stuffed his bill.

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 176.

On those refusing, he bestowed a kick,
Or menaced vengeance with his walking-stick;
Here, uncontrolled, he exercised his trade,
And grew experienced by the deaths he made;
By frequent blows we from his cane endured,
He killed at least as many as he cured,
On our lost comrades built his future fame,
And scattered fate where'er his footsteps came.
Some did not seem obedient to his will,
And swore he mingled poison with his pill;
But I acquit him by a fair confession—
He was no Englishman—he was a Hessian!
Although a dunce, he had some sense of sin,
Or else—the Lord knows where we now had been,—
Perhaps in that far country sent to range
Where never prisoner meets with an exchange!"[1]

But "this dog of Hesse," as the poet calls him, is but a subordinate officer of the medical staff, and has for his one redeeming quality that he is not an Englishman. Not even so much as that can be said on behalf of the man who stood above him, as surgeon-in-chief:

"One master o'er the murdering tribe was placed,—
By him the rest were honored or disgraced.
Once, and but once, by some strange fortune led,
He came to see the dying and the dead;
He came—but anger so deformed his eye,
And such a faulchion glittered on his thigh,
And such a gloom his visage darkened o'er,
And two such pistols in his hand he bore,
That, by the gods!—with such a load of steel
He came, we thought, to murder, not to heal!
Hell in his heart, and mischief in his head,
He gloomed destruction, and had smote us dead,
Had he so dared—but fate withheld his hand:
He came—blasphemed—and turned again to land!"[2]

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 178–179. [2] Ibid. 179.

VI.

From the time of Freneau's deliverance from imprisonment until the ratification of the treaty of peace, there seems to have been for him no interval of inactivity in his work as a satirist; and one now finds the years 1781, 1782, and 1783 thickly strown with his keen and poisoned verses. Indeed, a running commentary on the writings of this poet during the last three or four years of the Revolution, would be a running commentary on the most important aspects of our history during those years. Even the titles of his chief poems for that time have a value, as helping us to form some rude notion of the variety and range of the subjects with which he then dealt: "On the Memorable Victory obtained by the Gallant Captain Paul Jones, of the 'Good Man Richard,' over the 'Seraphis,' etc. under the command of Captain Pearson";[1] "To the Memory of the Brave Americans, under General Greene, who fell in the Action of September 8, 1781";[2] "To his Excellency General Washington";[3] "Dialogue between the Lords Dunmore and Mansfield";[4] "To Lord Cornwallis, at York, Virginia, October 8, 1781";[5] "An Epistle from Lord Cornwallis to Sir Henry Clinton";[6] "On the Fall of General Earl Cornwallis";[7] "Copy of an Intercepted Letter from a New York Tory to his Friend in Philadelphia";[8] "The Tenth Ode of Horace's Book of Epodes Imitated," for the departure of Benedict Arnold from New York, in December, 1781;[9] "A Speech that should have been spoken by the King of the Island of Britain to his Parliament," at the close of the campaign of 1781;[10] "Sir Harry's Call";[11] "Lord Dunmore's Petition to the Legislature of Virginia";[12] "Epigram occasioned by the Title of Rivington's Royal Gazette being Scarcely Legible";[13] "Song on

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 183–187.
[2] Ibid. 203–204.
[3] Ibid. 187–189.
[4] Ibid. 192–193.
[5] Ibid. 191–192.
[6] Ibid. 194–195.
[7] Ibid. 197–203.
[8] Ibid. 190–191.
[9] Ibid. 257–258.
[10] Ibid. 217–219.
[11] Ibid. 232–233.
[12] Ibid. 213–214.
[13] Ibid. 215.

Captain Barney's Victory over the Ship 'General Monk' "; [1] "On Sir Henry Clinton's Recall"; [2] "Sir Guy Carleton's Address to the Americans"; [3] "Lines Occasioned by General Robertson's Proclamation"; [4] "Satan's Remonstrance Occasioned by Mr. Rivington's Late Apology for Lying"; [5] "Rivington's Reflections, December, 1782"; [6] "Stanzas Occasioned by the Departure of the British from Charleston"; [7] "Hugh Gaine's Account of His Life"; [8] "The New York Refugees' Petition to Sir Guy Carleton"; [9] "A New York Tory's Epistle to One of his Friends in Pennsylvania, written previous to his Departure for Nova Scotia"; [10] and "Rivington's Confessions, Addressed to the Whigs of New York," [11] December 31, 1783.

VII.

In addition to the poems thus named as Freneau's chief productions for the last few years of the Revolution, are three others belonging to the same period, but so remarkable for their satiric quality, so rich in their interpretations of the later moods of the Revolutionist party, as to claim in this place our more particular consideration. The first, which probably was written in the year 1780, or in the first half of the year 1781, is entitled "The Political Balance, or, the Fates of Britain and America Compared," [12] and, for imaginative force and delicacy, for humor, for pungent wit, for spontaneity and liveliness of action, and for its easy mastery of the technique of comic verse, may be accounted as the most brilliant of all this author's writings.

At the outset, the reader gets from the couplet which forms its motto, a fair hint of the purpose and method of this sprightly composition:

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[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 241–244. [2] Ibid. 244–247.
[3] Ibid. 247–249. [4] Ibid. 255–256. [5] Ibid. 264–265.
[6] Ibid. 275–280. [7] Ibid. 291–293. [8] Ibid. 281–291.
[9] Ibid. 269–270. [10] Ibid. 295–298. [11] Ibid. 299–302; 305–309.
[12] Ibid. 224–232.

" Deciding fates, in Homer's style, I shew,
And bring contending gods once more to view."

It is, indeed, what its author calls it, " A Tale,"—a merry mock-classic tale in verse, wherein the principal gods of Olympus make a sudden and unexpected irruption into the sphere of modern and western life, and, looking down with sovereign derision upon its strutting and vulgar pretensions to greatness, proclaim judgments which, for the insurgent Americans of that time, must have had the effect of the most delicious paradox—upsetting all those tests and standards of personal or national value then imposed upon the world—particularly upon the American world—by the immense predominance of Great Britain:

" As Jove, the Olympian, (who both I and you know,
Was brother to Neptune, and husband to Juno)
Was lately reviewing his papers of state,
He happened to light on the records of Fate.

" In alphabet order this volume was written,
So he opened at B., for the article 'Britain.'
'She struggles so well,' said the god, 'I will see
What the sisters in Pluto's dominions decree!'

" And first on the top of a column he read—
'Of a king with a mighty soft place in his head,
Who should join in his temper the ass and the mule,
The Third of his name, and by far the worst fool:

" ' His reign shall be famous for multiplication,
The sire and the king of a whelp generation;
But such is the will and the purpose of Fate,
For each child he begets he shall forfeit a state.

" ' In the course of events, he shall find to his cost
That he cannot regain what he foolishly lost;
Of the nations around he shall be the derision,
And know by experience the rule of division.'

"So Jupiter read—a god of first rank—
And still had read on, but he came to a blank;
For the Fates had neglected the rest to reveal—
They either forgot it, or chose to conceal."[1]

Naturally annoyed at this neglect or refusal of the Fates to provide him with further information about the future of Great Britain, especially in its contention with America, Jupiter determines to obtain the information for himself, by just weighing the two contending parties in a huge pair of "Scales" which he knows of as existing somewhere in his sky. Accordingly, summoning Vulcan, he orders him at once to make a globe, with the several portions of the earth so adjusted to it that he could take them out one by one, and put them into the balance:

"How else should I know what the portions will weigh,
Or which of the combatants carry the day?"

With Jove's command, the ingenious blacksmith at once proceeded to comply:

"Made centre and circles as round as a pancake,
And here the Pacific, and there the Atlantic.

"An axis he hammered, whose ends were the Poles,
(On which the whole body perpetually rolls)
A brazen meridian he added to these,
On which were engraven twice ninety degrees.

"I am sure you had laughed to have seen his droll attitude,
When he bent round the surface the circles of latitude,
The zones, and the tropics, meridians, equator,
And other fine things that are drawn on salt water.

"Away to the southward—instructed by Pallas—
He placed in the ocean the Terra Australis,
New Holland, New Guinea and so of the rest—
America lay by herself in the west.

. . . . . .

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 224–225.

"Adjacent to Europe he struck up an island,
One part of it low, but the other was high land,
With many a comical creature upon it,
And one wore a hat, and another a bonnet.

"Like emmets or ants in a fine summer's day,
They ever were marching in battle array,
Or skipping about on the face of the brine
Like witches in egg-shells,—their ships of the line.

"These poor little creatures were all in a flame,
To the lands of America urging their claim,
Still biting, or stinging, or spreading their sails,—
For Vulcan had formed them with stings in their tails.

"So poor and so lean, you might count all their ribs,[1]
Yet were so enraptured with crackers and squibs,
That Vulcan with laughter almost split asunder—
'Because they imagined their crackers were thunder.'

"Due westward from these, with a channel between,
A servant to slaves, Hibernia was seen,
Once crowded with monarchs, and high in renown,—
But all she retained was the Harp and the Crown!

"Her genius, a female, reclined in the shade,
And, merely for music, so mournfully played,
That Jove was uneasy to hear her complain,
And ordered his blacksmith to loosen her chain.

. . . . . .

"At length, to discourage all stupid pretensions,
Jove looked at the globe, and approved its dimensions,
And cried in a transport—'Why! what have we here?
Friend Vulcan, it is a most beautiful sphere!

"'Now, while I am busy in taking apart
This globe that is formed with such exquisite art,
Go, Hermes, to Libra—you 're one of her gallants—
And ask, in my name, for the loan of her Balance.'

[1] "Their national debt being above £200,000,000 sterling." Freneau.

"Away posted Hermes as swift as the gales,
And as swiftly returned with the ponderous Scales,
And hung them aloft to a beam in the air,
So equally poised they had turned with a hair." [1]

Thus, having all things in readiness, Jove undertakes alone to lift "Columbia" into its scale, but to his amazement he finds that even his Olympian strength is unequal to the task. Accordingly, "turning about to their godships," he bids them all to join forces with him, and together to try to hoist the mighty mass:

"So to it they went, with handspikes and levers,
And upward she sprung, with her mountains and rivers,
Rocks, cities, and islands, deep waters and shallows,
Ships, armies, and forests, high heads and fine fellows!

"'Stick to it,' cries Jove, 'now heave one and all!
At least we are lifting one eighth of the Ball!
If backward she tumbles, then trouble begins,
And then have a care, my dear boys, of your shins!'

"When gods are determined, what project can fail?
So they gave a fresh shove, and she mounted the scale;
Suspended aloft, Jove viewed her with awe—
And the gods for their pay, had a hearty huzza!" [2]

At the mere appearance of an intention on Jove's part to do so preposterous a thing as to put Britain into the scale opposite that which held the enormous mass of Columbia, Neptune, who seems to have been standing by, perhaps without lending a hand, rudely bawls out—saluting his august brother as "a noddy!" Whereupon,

"'Away to your waters, you blustering bully,'
Said Jove, 'or I'll make you repent of your folly!
Is Jupiter, sir, to be tutored by you?—
Get out of my sight, for I know what I do!'

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 225–228. [2] Ibid. 228–229.

" Then searching about with his fingers for Britain,
Thought he, 'This same island I cannot well hit on;
The devil take him who first called her the Great!
If she was—she is vastly diminished of late.'

" Like a man that is searching his thigh for a flea,
He peeped, and he fumbled, but nothing could see;
At last he exclaimed—'I 'm surely upon it—
I think I have hold of a highlander's bonnet.'

" But finding his error he said with a sigh,
'This bonnet is only the island of Skie!'
So away to his namesake, the planet, he goes,
And borrowed two moons to hang on his nose:

" Through these, as through glasses, he saw her quite clear,
And in raptures cried out—'I have found her—she 's here!
If this be not Britain, then call me an ass—
She looks like a gem in an ocean of glass;

" 'But, faith, she 's so small I must mind how I shake her—
In a box I 'll inclose her, for fear I should break her:
Though a god, I might suffer for being aggressor,
Since scorpions, and vipers, and hornets possess her.

" 'The white cliffs of Albion are full in my view—
And the hills of Plinlimmon I think I could shew;
But, Vulcan, inform me what creatures are these,
That smell so of onions and garlick and cheese?'

" Old Vulcan replied—'Odds splutter a nails!
Why these are the Welsh, and the country is Wales!
When Taffy is vexed, no devil is ruder—
Take care how you handle the offspring of Tudor!

" 'On the crags of the mountains hur living hur seeks,
Hur country is planted with garlic and leeks;
So great is hur choler, beware how you tease hur,
For these are the Britons—unconquered—by Cæsar!'

"Jove peeped through his moons, and examined their features,
And said, 'By my troth, they are wonderful creatures!—
The beards are so long they encircle their throats,
That—unless they are Welshmen—I swear they are goats.

"'But now, my dear Juno, pray give me my mittens—
The insects I am going to handle are Britons—
I'll draw up their isle with a finger and thumb,
As the doctor extracts an old tooth from your gum.'

"Then he raised her aloft—but to shorten our tale—
She looked like a clod in the opposite scale,
Britannia so small, and Columbia so large—
A ship of first rate, and a ferryman's barge!"

Of course, the result of this grotesque experiment was only too obvious; and as he put back into their proper places the two contending sections of his globe,

"said Jove with a smile,
'Columbia shall never be ruled by an isle;
But vapors and darkness around her shall rise,
And tempests conceal her awhile from our eyes.

. . . . . .

"'Then cease your endeavors, ye vermin of Britain'—
And here in derision their island he spit on—
''T is madness to seek what you never can find,
Or think of uniting what nature disjoined;

"'But still you may flutter awhile with your wings,
And spit out your venom, and brandish your stings;
Your hearts are as black and as bitter as gall—
A curse to yourselves, and a blot on the Ball!'"[1]

VIII.

Some months after the American victory at Yorktown had made it plain to all the world that the war, even though it should be still further prolonged, was certainly to end at

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 229–332.

last in American Independence, Freneau sent forth the second of the three poems to which special attention has here been called,—a capital jeu d'esprit, called "The Prophecy," —a prophecy which, in mock imitation of an ancient oracle, is expressed in mystic terms, initials, and other transparent disguises,—a prophecy, also, which is written in that safest of all prophetic ways, namely, after the occurrence of the chief events which it assumes to foretell. Within the twenty-three lines of this delightful trifle, as in a poetic microcosm, one finds the whole American Revolution, in its great successive stages, humorously summed up and concluded, from the Whig point of view:

"When a certain great king, whose initial is G,
Shall force stamps upon paper, and folks to drink tea;
When these folks burn his tea and stampt paper, like stubble,
You may guess that this king is then coming to trouble.
But when a petition he treads under his feet,
And sends over the ocean an army and fleet;
When that army, half-starved, and frantic with rage,
Shall be cooped up with a leader whose name rhymes to cage;
When that leader goes home dejected and sad,
You may then be assured the king's prospects are bad.
But when B and C with their armies are taken,
This king will do well if he saves his own bacon.
In the year seventeen hundred and eighty and two,[1]
A stroke he shall get that will make him look blue;
In the years eighty-three, eighty-four, eighty-five,
You hardly shall know that the king is alive;
In the year eighty-six the affair will be over,
And he shall eat turnips that grow in Hanover.
The face of the Lion shall then become pale,
He shall yield fifteen teeth, and be sheared of his tail.
O king, my dear king, you shall be very sore;
The Stars and the Lily shall run you on shore,
And your Lion shall growl—but never bite more!"[2]

[1] Perhaps alludes to the provisional articles for a treaty of peace, recognizing American Independence.

[2] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 223.

IX.

Not, however, in jest or playfulness, but in uttermost sincerity of scorn, in the ruthlessness of unforgiving hate, was this poet of alienated America to say his last word to the unfortunate monarch whose blundering conscientiousness in king-craft, whose well-intentioned and prayerful obstinacy in baleful leadership, had at last brought to England the loss of her most valuable dependency, and to the English-speaking race a disruption that should bear for unborn millions on both sides of the Atlantic a legacy, perhaps an endless legacy, of mutual ill-will. Freneau's last word to King George of England—a poet's ban and malediction upon him and his people—was spoken in March, 1783, on the news of "the King's Speech, recommending Peace with the American States":

"Grown sick of war, and war's alarms,
Good George has changed his note at last—
Conquest and Death have lost their charms;
He and his nation stand aghast
To see what horrid lengths they 've gone,
And what a brink they stand upon.

. . . . . .

"Let jarring powers make war or peace,
Monster!—no peace shall greet thy breast:
Our murdered friends shall never cease
To hover round and break thy rest!
The Furies shall thy bosom tear,
Remorse, Distraction, and Despair,
And Hell with all its fiends, be there!

"Curs'd be the ship that e'er set sail
Hence, freighted for thy odious shore;
May tempests o'er her strength prevail,
Destruction round her roar!
May Nature all her aids deny,

The sun refuse his light,
The needle from its object fly,
No star appear by night,
Till the base pilot, conscious of his crime,
Directs the prow to some more grateful clime.

"Genius! that first our race designed,
To other kings impart
The finer feelings of the mind,
The virtues of the heart!
When'er the honors of a throne
Fall to the bloody and the base,
Like Britain's monster, pull them down!—
Like his, be their disgrace!

"Hibernia, seize each native right!
Neptune, exclude him from the main;
Like her that sunk with all her freight,
The 'Royal George,' take all his fleet,
And never let them rise again;
Confine him to his gloomy isle,
Let Scotland rule her half;
Spare him to curse his fate awhile,
And Whitehead—thou to write his epitaph!"[1]

X.

After a considerate inspection of the writers and the writings of our Revolutionary era, it is likely that most readers will be inclined to name Philip Freneau as the one American poet of all that time who, though fallen on evil days and driven from his true course somewhat by stormy weather, yet had a high and questionless vocation for poetry. Of his own claim to recognition he was proudly conscious, as sometimes appeared when, in blunt and facetious fashion, he was retorting upon some of his literary brethren who both robbed and calumniated him:

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 293–295.

"The sun 's in the west,
And I am opprest
With fellows attempting to blacken my muse,
Who hardly have genius to blacken my shoes."[1]

Nor was he unconscious of all that was malign to his poetic destiny, both in the time and in the place on which his lot was cast:

"What doom the Fates intend, is hard to say,—
Whether to live to some far-distant day,
Or, sickening in your prime,
In this bard-baiting clime,
Take pet, make wings, say prayers, and flit away."[2]

Even in the larger relations which an American poet in the eighteenth century might hold to the development of English poetry everywhere, Freneau did some work, both early and late, so fresh, so original, so unhackneyed, so defiant of the traditions that then hampered and deadened English verse, so delightful in its fearless appropriation of common things for the divine service of poetry, as to entitle him to be called a pioneer of the new poetic age that was then breaking upon the world, and therefore to be classed with Cowper, Burns, Wordsworth, and their mighty comrades,—those poetic iconoclasts who, entering the temple of eighteenth-century English verse, broke up its wooden idols, rejected its conventionalized diction, and silenced forever its pompous, monotonous, and insincere tune.

Finally, of Freneau, it remains to be said that, in a certain eminent sense, he was the first American poet of Democracy; and that from the beginning to the end of his career, and in spite of every form of temptation, he remained true—fiercely, savagely true—to the conviction, that his part and lot in the world was to be a protagonist on behalf of mere human nature, as against all its assailants

[1] "The Poems of Philip Freneau," 155.
[2] "Poems on Several Occasions," 394.

whether in church or state. In the year 1795—during Washington's second term in the presidency—this combat-loving poet sent forth a second and an enlarged edition of his poems, which had been first issued seven years before; and in some verses which he therein inserted, entitled "To My Book," one may still hear the proud voice with which he claimed for himself that, whether in other ways successful or not, he was at least a poet militant—ever doing battle on the people's side:

"Seven years are now elapsed, dear rambling volume,[1]
Since, to all knavish wights a foe,
I sent you forth to vex and gall 'em,
Or drive them to the shades below,—

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[1] "Poems on Several Occasions," 394–395. It does not come within the scope of this book to deal with the literary work of Freneau after 1783; but as some of his publications after that date included work done by him during the Revolution, it may be proper to mention that in 1788, at Philadelphia, was published "Miscellaneous Works of Mr. Philip Freneau, Containing his Essays and Additional Poems." The only copy of this book which I have ever met with, formerly belonged to George Ticknor, and by his gift is now the property of the Massachusetts Historical Society. It has prose and verse intermingled,—some of it, doubtless, produced during the Revolution. Freneau was the master of a delightful prose style, easy, sinewy, touched with delicate humor, crisp, and keen-edged. As good examples of his work, I noted in this volume "Advice to Authors, by the late Robert Slender," 42–48; "Robert Slender's Idea of the Human Soul," 87–91; "The Market Man," 93–94; "The Debtor," 96–97; "Rules and Directions How to Avoid Creditors, Sheriffs, Constables, etc." 97–106; "The City Poet," 111–119; "Directions for Courtship," 133–140. In 1809, at Philadelphia, was published in two volumes, the third edition of his collected poems, entitled "Poems Written and Published During the American Revolutionary War, and now Republished from the Original Manuscripts, interspersed with Translations from the Ancients, and other Pieces not heretofore in Print." There is need of a thorough life of Freneau, based upon letters of his and other materials never yet used. We ought, also, to have a carefully edited collection of his writings in prose and verse. At present, we have only sketches of him,—as by John W. Francis, in Duyckinck's "Cyclopædia of American Literature," i. 332–333; in the "Introduction" to the London reprint of his "Poems," A.D. 1861; in Evert A. Duyckinck's "Introductory Memoir" to Freneau's "Poems Relating to the American Revolution"; and by Edward F. DeLancey, in "Philip Freneau the Huguenot Patriot-Poet of the Revolution and his Poetry."

With spirit still of Democratic proof,
And still despising Shylock's cankered hoof.

. . . . . .

For seven years past, a host of busy foes
Have buzzed about your nose,
White, black, and grey, by night and day,
Garbling, lying, singing, sighing.
These eastern gales a cloud of insects bring
That, fluttering, snivelling, whimpering, on the wing,
And wafted still as Discord's demon guides,
Flock round the flame that yet shall singe their hides.

"Well!—let the Fates decree whate'er they please:
Whether you 're doomed to drink Oblivion's cup,
Or Praise-God-Barebones eats you up,
This I can say, you 've spread your wings afar,
Hostile to garter, ribbon, crown, and star,—
Still on the People's, still on Freedom's side,
With full determined aim, to baffle every claim
Of well-born wights that aim to mount and ride."

CHAPTER XXXV.

PULPIT-CHAMPIONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

I.—The tradition of leadership inherited by the pulpit of the Revolution—The political power of the preachers as recognized by Otis and others—Public occasions for political discourse from the pulpit.

II.—Charles Chauncy's services to the Revolution as preacher, author, and political monitor—His special enjoyment of theological controversy.

III.—Sermon before the Revolutionary assembly of Massachusetts, May 31, 1775, by Samuel Langdon, president of Harvard College.

IV.—Our first national Fast Day, July 20, 1775, as the occasion for sermons in all the colonies on the political and military crisis—At the camp in Roxbury, by Ezra Sampson—At Philadelphia, by Thomas Coombe, assistant rector of Christ Church and St. Peter's.

V.—The first national Fast Day as observed by Congress at Philadelphia—The sermon by Jacob Duché—His history and character—His brilliant oratory—"The first prayer in Congress"—The eclat of his various services for the Revolutionary cause—Under the military reverses of the summer of 1776, he loses heart, and advises Washington to stop the war—Duché's retreat to England, and popularity there—His "Discourses on Various Subjects," 1777—His once famous "Caspipina's Letters."

VI.—Jacob Green, a preacher of Revolutionary politics, in New Jersey.

VII.—Pulpit warnings against the moral and spiritual dangers of the times—Oliver Hart, of Charleston, South Carolina, preaches against the sin of dancing—Israel Evans preaches to the troops in Pennsylvania against the religious apathy and immorality then prevalent.

VIII.—Hugh Henry Brackenridge as chaplain in Washington's army in 1777—His previous career as student, teacher, and poet—His "Six Political Discourses Founded on Scripture"—His chant of patriotic hatred and vengeance—His prophetic woes on the enemies of American peace and freedom.

IX.—Samuel Cooper of Boston—His unusual influence in letters, society, and affairs—His political essays—His published discourses.

X.—Sermon by Nathan Fiske of Brookfield, on the capture of Lord Cornwallis.

XI.—Zabdiel Adams's election sermon in Massachusetts, 1782.

XII.—Nathaniel Whitaker of Salem—His sermons in imprecation of the Tories.

XIII.—Sermons on the day of national Thanksgiving for Independence and Peace, December 11, 1783—By Eliphalet Porter, at Roxbury—By David Osgood at Medbury—By John Rodgers in New York,

XIV.—George Duffield of Philadelphia—His career—His prominence as a political preacher—Extolled by John Adams, in 1775 and 1776—His services as army chaplain—As a mark for Odell's satire—His sermon on the advent of Peace.

I.

"In America, as in the Grand Rebellion in England," said a Loyalist writer of our Revolutionary time, "much execution was done by sermons."[1] Had it been otherwise, there would now be cause for wonder. Indeed, the preachers were then in full possession of that immense leadership, intellectual and moral, which had belonged to their order, in America ever since its settlement, in England ever since the middle of the sixteenth century; and though this tradition of leadership was beginning to suffer under the rivalry of the printing-press and under the ever-thickening blows of rationalism, yet, when aroused and concentrated upon any object, they still wielded an enormous influence over the opinions and actions of men,—even as to the business of this world. Without the aid "of the black regiment," as James Otis facetiously called them, he declared his inability to carry his points.[2] Late in the year 1774 the Loyalist, Daniel Leonard, in an essay accounting for the swift and alarming growth of the spirit of resistance and even of revolution in America, gave a prominent place to the part then played in the agitation by "our dissenting ministers." "What effect must it have had upon the audience," said he, "to hear the same sentiments and principles, which they had before read in a newspaper, delivered on Sundays from the sacred desk, with a religious awe, and the most solemn appeals to heaven, from lips which they had been taught from their cradles, to believe could utter nothing but eternal truths!"[3]

The literary history of the pulpit of the American Revolution is virtually a history of the pulpit-champions of that movement; since those preachers who were not its champions could seldom find a printer bold enough to put their sermons to press, or even an opportunity to speak them

[1] J. Boucher, "Autobiography" in "Notes and Queries," 5th Series, vi. 142.
[2] Tudor, "Life of Otis," 492 n.
[3] "Nov. and Massachusettensis," 151.

from the pulpit.[1] Nor was it necessary that ministers should seem to go out of their way in order to discourse upon those bitter secular themes: indeed, they would have been forced to go out of their way in order to avoid doing so. Fast days, thanksgiving days, election days, the anniversaries of battles and of important acts of Congress and of other momentous events in the progress of the struggle, brought such topics to the very doors of their studies, and even laid them upon the open Bibles in their pulpits. Moreover, if any clergyman held back from political preaching, he was not likely to escape some reminder, more or less gentle, as to what was expected of him in such a time of awful stress and peril. "Does Mr. Wibird preach against oppression and the other cardinal vices of the time?" wrote John Adams to his wife, from Philadelphia, shortly after the battle of Bunker Hill. "Tell him, the clergy here of every denomination, not excepting the Episcopalian, thunder and lighten every Sabbath. They pray for Boston and the Massachusetts. They thank God most explicitly and fervently for our remarkable successes. They pray for the American army."[2]

II.

One of the purest and most undaunted public characters to confront us on the threshold of this period, is Charles Chauncy,[3] pastor of the First Church in Boston, who as preacher, author, and political monitor brought to the service of the Revolution a keen and a ripe intellect, unbounded courage, and the prestige of long and manifold

[1] In Chapter xiv. of the present work, Jonathan Boucher is taken as the representative of the Loyalist preachers of the Revolution; even as Jonathan Mayhew is dealt with in Chapter vi. as the representative of the preachers who, in the first years of the Revolution, educated public opinion for its bold doctrines and duties.

[2] "Letters of John Adams, Addressed to His Wife," i. 50.

[3] His character, and his career as a writer prior to the American Revolution, are dealt with by me in "A History of American Literature during the Colonial Time," ii. 199–203.

literary industry. He brought to the service of the Revolution, also, an invincible confidence in its final triumph. "Our cause is so just," said he again and again, "that if human efforts should fail, a host of angels would be sent to support it."[1]

With the Revolutionary movement, in every stage and phase of it, particularly as interpreted by the radical politicians of New England, he was in perfect sympathy. Perhaps his most characteristic contribution to its development was made through the part he took in that violent controversy which raged during the earliest years of the Revolution, over the projected introduction of Anglican bishops into America,[2]—a controversy which had no little effect in creating and inflaming American suspicion as to the dangerous and, in fact, damnable designs of the British government for a universal suppression of human rights in America. From year to year, however, during this whole period, there was scarcely an aspect of the moving scene, upon which this apostle of civic righteousness and fortitude did not utter some notable comment, giving to his imperiled countrymen the most ample help in the form of counsel, warning, and reproof. Thus, in 1766, he published "A Discourse on 'the Good News from a Far Country,'" delivered on the day of public thanksgiving for the repeal of the Stamp Act, and discussing the whole problem of Anglo-American relations, with the tone of a man of affairs as well as of a cloistered thinker and a divine.[3] In 1770, he sounded his

[1] Tudor, "The Life of James Otis," 148.

[2] The titles of his publications touching the Episcopal controversy, which are too numerous for mention in the text, may be easily found by those who have the curiosity therefor, in any one of the several extant lists of his published writings for his entire career, as follows:

(1) John Clarke, "A Discourse . . . at the Interment of the Rev. Charles Chauncy," etc., Boston: 1787.

(2) Sprague, "Annals," etc., viii. 10–11.

(3) William Chauncey Fowler, "Memorials of the Chaunceys," 51–54.

(4) Sabin, "A Dictionary of Books relating to America," iii. 546–553.

(5) Paul Leicester Ford, "Bibliotheca Chaunciana." The last is by far the most complete and the most accurate.

[3] A reprint of this sermon may be seen in John Wingate Thornton, "The Pulpit of the American Revolution," 105–146.

usual high note of political courage, in a sermon entitled "Trust in God the Duty of a People in a Day of Trouble." In 1774, he published "A Letter to a Friend," giving an account "of the hardships and sufferings the town of Boston . . . must undergo in consequence of the late act of the British parliament." In 1778, he published a sermon against "sordid avarice" as "the accursed Thing" which "must be taken away from among a people, if they would reasonably hope to stand before their enemies."

When, at last, the triumph of the Revolution loomed in clear vision just before him, this master and lover of debate was quite free to give himself up to the bliss of a new theological controversy—more lively, if possible, than the political and military one then drawing to its end—a controversy over the doctrine of future punishment. Upon this question Chauncy, who took the less glowing but more genial side, published, in 1782, a little book entitled, "Salvation of All Men, Illustrated and Vindicated as a Scripture Doctrine"; in 1783, a little book entitled, "Divine Glory brought to View, in the Final Salvation of All Men"; in 1784, a large book entitled, "The Mystery hid from Ages and Generations, made manifest by the Gospel-Revelation; or, the Salvation of All Men the Grand Thing aimed at in the Scheme of God." In setting forth his own optimistic faith as to the divine management of the universe, he had sometimes a sparkling and a grimly playful zest, as when, for example, he opposed his own view to that of an antagonist who had laid down the doctrine, that the everlasting misery of a portion of the human race "was consistent with the justice of God, and essential to His glory." "I have such a veneration for my Creator," says Chauncy, "as to suppose He needs no foil to set off His perfections; such an opinion of the Saints, as to imagine they could relish their felicity, without being spectators of the misery of the damned. I place such a value upon the merits and death of my Redeemer, as to conclude all will be happy for whom He suffered on the Cross. And I pay such a regard

to the positive declarations of Scripture, as to anticipate the restitution of all things, when the ruins of the Fall shall be more than repaired, and the creature which now groans shall groan no more." He is but too glad, also, to admit that the God whom he serves, is "very unlike" the God of his antagonist: "The God to whom you pay your religious homage, needs the introduction of sin and misery, in order to illustrate His own character, and display His divine perfections. I bow my knee to a Power intrinsically excellent, who can shine without contrast, whose glory is essential, whose happiness is immutable, and who would be the admiration of His creatures, even were guilt and suffering banished the universe. You expect to look down from Heaven upon numbers of wretched objects, confined in the Pit of Hell, and blaspheming their Creator forever. I hope to see the prison-doors opened, and to hear those tongues which are now profaning the name of God, chaunting His praise. In one word, you imagine the Divine Glory will be advanced by immortalizing sin and misery: I, by exterminating both natural and moral evil, and introducing universal happiness. Which of our systems is best supported, let reason and Scripture determine." [1]

III.

On the thirty-first of May, 1775,—in the grim interval between Concord and Bunker Hill,—there was convened at the village of Watertown, a few miles west of Cambridge, an assemblage of delegates from the several towns of Massachusetts, to act as a provisional government for the colony in place of their General Court which, under the circumstances, could not be held. It was the anniversary of the day fixed by royal charter for the election, by the lower house, of the members of the colonial council: a day on which, for nearly a century and a half, it had been customary for the members of the legislature to go in a body to the

[1] "Divine Glory brought to View," etc., 3–4.

house of worship and listen to a sermon from some eminent preacher expressly chosen for the purpose. The stately and venerable associations of the day were not forgotten by those sturdy representatives at Watertown; and though a rude intermission had then befallen their regular government, they determined to keep alive as many as possible of its ancient forms. Accordingly on this day, having proceeded to the old village meeting-house, they were addressed by Samuel Langdon, president of Harvard College, who, in the very first sentences of his discourse, gave voice to the stern grief, the indignation, the undaunted purpose that were in all their hearts. "On this day," said he, "the people have from year to year assembled from all our towns, in a vast congregation, with gladness and festivity, with every ensign of joy displayed in our metropolis, which now, alas, is made a garrison of mercenary troops, the stronghold of despotism! But how shall I now address you from this desk, remote from the capital, and remind you of the important business which distinguished this day in our calendar, without spreading a gloom over this assemblage by exhibiting the melancholy change made in the face of our public affairs? We have lived to see the time when British liberty is just ready to expire; when that constitution of government which has so long been the glory and strength of the English nation, is deeply undermined and ready to tumble into ruins; when America is threatened with cruel oppression, and the arm of power is stretched out against New England, and especially against this colony, to compel us to submit to the arbitrary acts of legislators who are not our representatives, and who will not themselves bear the least part of the burdens which without mercy they are laying upon us. The most formal and solemn grants of kings to our ancestors are deemed by our oppressors as of little value; and they have mutilated the charter of this colony in the most essential parts, upon false representations and new-invented maxims of policy, without the least regard to any legal process. We are no longer permitted to fix our eyes on

the faithful of the land, and trust in the wisdom of their counsels and the equity of their judgment; but men in whom we can have no confidence—whose principles are subversive of our liberties . . . men who are ready to serve any master and execute the most unrighteous decrees, for high wages—whose faces we never saw before, and whose interests and connections may be far divided from us by the wide Atlantic—are to be set over us as councilors and judges, at the pleasure of those who have the riches and power of the nation in their hands, and whose noblest plan is to subjugate the colonies first, and then the whole nation, to their will." [1]

IV.

In view of the "critical, alarming, and calamitous state" of America, after the battles of Lexington and Concord, the 20th of July, 1775, had been appointed by the Continental Congress "for all the English colonies on this continent as a day of public humiliation, fasting, and prayer"; [2] and in at least thirteen of those colonies the day was observed accordingly,—being, indeed, "the first general fast ever kept on one day since the settlement" of the country; [3] and being, likewise, a notable proof that these same American colonies had finally passed from the stage of local separatism into the stage of incipient national unity. On that day, therefore, from New Hampshire to Georgia, the pulpit became the organ of this new national consciousness—of this universal alarm and pain and hate and aspiration; it then spoke out in every tone natural to Englishmen, to freemen, and to Christians.

On that day, at the camp at Roxbury, Massachusetts, a most stirring sermon [4] was preached to the officers and men of Colonel Cotton's regiment by the youthful pastor of the Congregational Church at Plympton, Ezra Sampson, a graduate of Yale, a man of abilities so remarkable that he

[1] "A Sermon," etc., 5–7.
[2] "Journals of the Am. Cong.," i. 81–82.
[3] A. Holmes, "Annals," etc., ii. 215.
[4] Published at Watertown: 1775.

was described by one of his classmates "as being both Sampson by name and Sampson by nature."[1] "It is recorded of a Turkish general," exclaimed the preacher, "that being called to engage a Christian army which had broken through the most solemn ties, he stood up at the head of his troops, and then taking out the treaty that they had violated and holding it up to view, thus addressed the Throne of Heaven: 'O Almighty Being, if thou art, as they say thou art, these Christians' God, thou lovest what is right and hatest perfidy. Look down, therefore, and behold this treaty which they have broken; and as thou canst not favor what is wrong, render their arms successless, and make mine victorious.' He ended. Immediately the sword was drawn; the two parties vigorously engaged, and the perfidious Christians were beaten off the field. And may not we also hold up a broken charter, the cruel port bill, and the most impious and infamous Quebec bill, adding to these the inhuman, unequaled treachery exercised toward the distressed inhabitants of Boston, as witnesses of the perfidy of our enemies and what their designs upon us are?"[2]

On that day, Thomas Coombe, assistant minister of Christ Church and St. Peter's in Philadelphia, an orator trained to a most flowing and impressive pulpit-style, preached a sermon[3] suitable to the time; for though afterward he

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[1] Letter of Edward Robinson, in Sprague, "Annals," ii. 124.

[2] "A Sermon," etc., 19–20. This preacher lived to the year 1823, and became well known, not only for his published sermons but for his numerous articles in "The Balance" and in the "Connecticut Courant," and for several books, namely, "The Beauties of the Bible," "The Historical Dictionary," and "The Brief Remarker." His is another example of the strong impulse given to literary activity at Yale College during the decade immediately preceding the Declaration of Independence.

[3] Published in Philadelphia in 1775. In the year previous, he had also published the substance of two sermons on "The Harmony between the Old and New Testament respecting the Messiah." He was also a writer of verse. Thus he published in Philadelphia in 1775, "Edwin or the Emigrant, an Eclogue," wherein Edwin sings of "Auburn's vale," of his own deceased wife Emma, and of other poetic subjects—all in strains melodiously mixed of Goldsmith and

shrank back from the proposition for Independence, he fully justified the course of the colonists thus far in their opposition to ministerial encroachments. Moreover, in this sermon preached upon an occasion of state, he did not fail to point out the frequent and fatal connection between public calamity and private misdoing. In the very year in which the physical conflict of the Revolution began, in the very city in which that conflict was officially directed on behalf of the Revolutionists, this preacher saw reason to lament over the frivolity, the self-indulgence, the gross and sordid vices of the people: "What a rage for pleasure, what extravagance in dress and dissipation, what an unworthy pride of going beyond each other in splendor of appearance. . . . O Philadelphia, dear native city! . . . thy inhabitants, like those of ancient Babylon, dwell carelessly in their habitations; . . . thy young men have far exceeded the bounds of decent or honorable amusement, and scarce any are to be found of either sex stemming the general corruption." [1]

V.

On the morning of the day thus set apart for a solemn consideration by the American people of their sins, dangers, duties, the members of Congress took the trouble to conform to their own recommendation by assembling at half-past nine o'clock, at their usual place of meeting, and going thence in a body "to attend divine service at Mr. Duché's church," [2] where, as was expected, the sermon was preached

water. I have seen a copy of this poem published likewise in Philadelphia, but without date and under a title somewhat altered, namely "The Peasant of Auburn, or the Emigrant. A Poem." This alteration has led to the mistake that these two titles stand for two different poems. For example, "Appletons' Cyclopædia of Am. Biog.," sub. nom.

[1] "A Sermon," etc., 13.

[2] These words, as if from some official minutes which he does not designate, are cited by E. D. Neill, in "The Pa. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.," ii. 66. In my copy of the "Journals of the Am. Cong.," i. 120, the entry of their agreement "to attend divine service" does not mention the church to which they are to go.

by Mr. Duché himself. Representing America as a vine still united to the parent-stalk of Britain, the preacher gave them a vivid and impassioned discourse, wherein, doubtless, every radical Revolutionary politician in Congress had the gratification of hearing his own opinions proclaimed, with melodious fervor, by the most eloquent and fashionable Anglican clergyman in the land. The orator spoke of himself and his countrymen as "injured and oppressed," and as "unmeriting the harsh and rigorous treatment" they were receiving from the mother country; and he thrilled his hearers with fresh indignation and horror at the unnaturalness of this severity: "'T is not now," he exclaimed, "a foreign enemy, or the savages of our own wilderness, that have made the cruel and unrighteous assault; but it is even thou, Britain, that with merciless and unhallowed hands wouldst cut down and destroy this branch of thine own vine."[1]

The preacher who spoke these flaming words, was the Reverend Jacob Duché, rector of the united parishes of Christ Church and St. Peter's, himself at that time thirty-eight years of age, of an old and influential family in Pennsylvania, a member of the first class graduated from the College of Philadelphia, a man noted for his affectionate and generous nature, and for his high cultivation,—his many brilliant and captivating gifts being made still more captivating by the extraordinary sweetness of his voice and his own rather wonderful mastery of it.[2] Alas, as the event proved, it was the misfortune of this pleasant gentleman, that, living in times which called for virile and stern qualities—sound sense, toughness, tenacity, the power to resist flattery and to take blows—he lacked all these, and yet pos-

[1] "The American Vine," 20–21. A Sermon preached before Congress, 20 July, 1775. Philadelphia: 1775.

[2] The first Bishop of Pennsylvania considered Whitefield as the best reader of the Prayer Book he had ever heard, and next to Whitefield, Jacob Duché. He also attributed much of Duché's popularity as a preacher to his "remarkably fine voice and graceful action." Bird Wilson, "Mem. of Bishop White," 28; and Sprague, "Annals," etc., v. 185.

sessed exactly the sort of talent to render his lack of them conspicuous and lamentable.

Nearly a year before the time of Duché's fast-day sermon, he had come into great prominence before the country by an act of devout patriotism which, indeed, at once endeared him to all friends of the Revolution, and which made him the central figure in a noble and pathetic scene still celebrated in our history: he it was who uttered "the first prayer in Congress."

That illustrious body had met for the first time in its existence on Monday, the fifth of September, 1774. On the day following, Cushing of Massachusetts had moved that their daily sessions should be opened with prayer. To this proposal an objection was made by Jay of New York and by Rutledge of South Carolina, on the ground that, proper as the act would be, it was rendered impracticable by their diversity in religious sentiments and usages—some of the members being Congregationalists, some Presbyterians, some Anabaptists, some Episcopalians, some Quakers. Whereupon the sturdy Puritan, Samuel Adams, stood up in his place and said, that while he was a Congregationalist, "he was no bigot, and could hear a prayer from a gentleman of piety and virtue, who was at the same time a friend to his country. He was a stranger in Philadelphia, but had heard that Mr. Duché deserved that character; and therefore he moved that Mr. Duché, an Episcopal clergyman, might be desired to read prayers to the Congress to-morrow morning."[1] Under this gust of magnanimous feeling, the motion prevailed;[2] and, accordingly, the clergyman thus mentioned, having been waited on in person by Peyton Randolph, the President of Congress, graciously consented to their wishes. It happened, likewise, almost at the very moment when Randolph was laying before Duché the invitation of Congress, that the whole town was thrown into consternation by the news which, happily, turned out

[1] "Letters of John Adams," etc., i, 23.
[2] "Journals of the Am. Congress," i. 8.

to be false—that the British forces in the neighborhood of Boston had opened fire upon that beleagured and distressed city. Under such circumstances it was, that on the following morning, Wednesday, the seventh of September, the rector of Christ Church and St. Peter's arrived at the door of Carpenter's Hall. "He appeared with his clerk and in his pontificals," as John Adams wrote in a letter a few days afterward, "and read several prayers in the established form, and then read the collect[1] for the seventh day of September, which was the thirty-fifth Psalm. You must remember, this was the next morning after we heard the horrible rumor of the cannonade of Boston. I never saw a greater effect upon an audience. It seemed as if Heaven had ordained that Psalm to be read on that morning. After this, Mr. Duché, unexpectedly to everybody, struck out into an extemporary prayer, which filled the bosom of every man present. I must confess, I never heard a better prayer, or one so well pronounced. . . . Dr. Cooper himself never prayed with such fervor, such ardor, such earnestness and pathos, and in language so elegant and sublime, for America, for the Congress, for the province of Massachusetts Bay, and especially the town of Boston. It has had an excellent effect upon everybody here. . . . Mr. Duché is one of the most ingenious men, and best characters, and greatest orators, in the Episcopal order upon this continent—yet a zealous friend of liberty and his country."[2]

Outside of Congress, also, the eclat of this performance was very great; and thenceforward throughout the remainder of that year, and throughout the years 1775 and 1776, Duché was a burning and a shining light among American

[1] As John Adams's devotions had not been of a kind to make him familiar with the Prayer Book, he may be easily pardoned for calling the Psalter for the day, its "collect." He mentions the thirty-fifth Psalm only; but the Psalter for the seventh day of the month includes the thirty-sixth Psalm also, which was undoubtedly read by Duché, and which must have increased the impression of the astonishing applicability of the portion of ancient Scriptures ages before set apart for that particular day.

[2] "Letters of John Adams," etc., i. 23–24.

civilians and soldiers then engaged in making resistance to the colonial policy of England, and finally in throwing off her authority altogether. Thus, in a fiery sermon preached by him within the walls of Christ Church, about a fortnight after the battle of Bunker Hill, he exhorts the first battalion of Philadelphia troops there present, to remember the duty of standing fast in their spiritual and temporal liberties—of standing fast even in that terrific conflict which England, in her jealousy, as he says, of the rising greatness of America, was then forcing upon her American children. "Stand fast," cried out this surpliced Captain Bobadil to a throng of men then banded and weaponed for an enterprise that was likely to prove a very serious one to them, "stand fast by a steady constancy and perseverance. Difficulties unlooked for may yet arise, and trials present themselves sufficient to shake the utmost firmness of human fortitude. Be prepared, therefore, for the worst. Suffer not your spirits to evaporate by too violent an ebullition now. Be not too eager to bring matters to an extremity, lest you should be wearied out by a continued exertion, and your constancy should fail you at the most important crisis. Coolly and deliberately wait for those events which are in the hands of Providence; and depend upon Him alone for strength and expedients suited to your necessities. In a word, my brethren, though the worst should come, though we should be deprived of all the conveniences and elegancies of life, though we should be cut off from all our usual sources of commerce, and constrained, as many of our brethren have already been, to abandon our present comfortable habitations, let us, nevertheless, stand fast as the guardians of liberty."[1] Brave advice was this, and bravely spoken; and probably no man needed it more, or violated it sooner, than the man himself from whose quivering lips it fell upon that rapt congregation.

A few days after the Declaration of Independence, Duché

[1] This sermon, dedicated to Washington, was published in 1775 both in Philadelphia and in London. The words quoted are on pages 23–24.

was officially notified that, in consideration of his "piety" as well as of his "uniform and zealous attachment to the rights of America," the Congress of the United States had appointed him their chaplain, and would be pleased to have him attend on them every morning at nine o'clock.[1] Attend on them, accordingly, he did, every morning for the next three months, and prayed most fervently for the Divine blessing upon their acts in rejection of the authority of the king and in resistance of his power: "Look down in mercy, we beseech Thee, on these our American States, who have fled to Thee from the rod of the oppressor, and thrown themselves on Thy gracious protection, desiring to be henceforth dependent only on Thee. To Thee have they appealed for the righteousness of their cause; to Thee do they now look up for that countenance and support which Thou alone canst give. Take them, therefore, Heavenly Father, under Thy nurturing care. Give them wisdom in council, and valor in the field; defeat the malicious designs of our cruel adversaries; convince them of the unrighteousness of their cause; and if they still persist in their sanguinary purposes, oh! let the voice of Thine own unerring justice, sounding in their hearts, constrain them to drop the weapons of war from their unnerved hands in the day of battle."[2] Not long, however, after this prayer had been first uttered, the cause on behalf of which it was made began to suffer that series of military reverses which brought on the times that tried men's souls—times in which the soul of poor Duché was tried, and found wanting. For when, at last, these reverses to the American cause culminated in the possession of Philadelphia by the British, Duché promptly turned the political coat which he wore under his surplice; and opening his church for the use

[1] John Hancock's letter notifying Duché of the appointment is given by Neill, in "Pennsylvania Mag.," etc., ii. 67. The appointment was made 9 July, 1776. "Jour. Am. Cong.," i. 402. An error seems to have crept into the date of Hancock's letter, in Neill's copy.

[2] The whole prayer is given in Sabine, "Loyalists of the Am. Rev.," i. 389.

of those "cruel adversaries" against whom he had prayed with so much energy, he at once restored to the service such portions of the Prayer Book as he had latterly omitted,[1] and especially gave to the prayers for the king and the royal family the benefit of his most sympathetic and thrilling vocal expression. Soon after that feat of moral versatility, Duché did almost the only logical thing that was left for him to do—he addressed a letter to his friend, the commander-in-chief of the American army, exhorting him by all that was sacred and prudent, "to represent to Congress the indispensable necessity of rescinding the hasty and ill-advised Declaration of Independency." "Your interposition and advice, I am confident, would meet with a favorable reception from the authority under which you act; if it should not, you have an infallible recourse still left—negotiate for your country at the head of your army."[2]

Certainly, as soon as these facts got abroad, this country could hardly be expected to afford a comfortable habitation for the Reverend Jacob Duché. Indeed, a few weeks after his letter to Washington, the newspapers appropriately announced his departure for England, in the distinguished company of Lord Cornwallis, General Cliveland, and Sir George Osborne. Moreover, the country which, in its dire distress, Duché thus abandoned, he never saw again—he was never permitted to see again—until, in 1792, being then old, paralytic, and harmless, he appeared once more in the

[1] "Pennsylvania Mag.," etc., ii. 69.

[2] "The Duché Letter to General Washington," n. p.; n. d., 6–7. This reprint seems to have been made from a copy found among the Duché MSS. offered for sale in Philadelphia in 1893. The very letter which was sent to Washington by Duché is now in the Department of State, and an exact reprint of it has been issued by Worthington Chauncey Ford, in his collection of eight letters from and to Washington and relating to Duché's political attitude during the Revolution; "The Washington-Duché Letters." Between Ford's version and the one given in Sparks, "Corr. of the Am. Rev.," i. 448–458, are many variations. The Philadelphia copy, from which I have quoted above, is almost identical with the text of Sparks's version. Neither, therefore, is quite so valid as Ford's version, which I had not at hand at the time of making my citations.

city of his birth, where it was given him to witness the stately beginnings of the national life of the young Republic under the presidency of that very General whom, in its dark days, he had exhorted to betray both himself and it to the enemy. Six years afterward, his body was laid by the side of his wife's in the churchyard of St. Peter's.

As to Duché's part in the literature of the Revolution, it may be mentioned, that besides the occasional sermons which he sent to the press before he took leave of his country, he published in London, in 1779, two beautiful volumes entitled "Discourses on Various Subjects,"—these discourses being products of his long career in Philadelphia, each volume, also, being adorned with a frontispiece from a painting by the former Philadelphian, Benjamin West. In 1790, this work had passed to its third edition.

By far the most notable contribution made by him to our literature, was a little book commonly known as "Caspipina's Letters," first published in Philadelphia, 1774; republished in Bath, 1777, in London, 1791, and in Dublin, 1792. It was also translated into German and published at Leipsic in 1778.[1] Its exact title is "Observations on a Variety of Subjects, Literary, Moral, and Religious, in a Series of original Letters written by a Gentleman of Foreign Extraction, who resided some Time in Philadelphia." The hypothetical writer of these letters is a young Englishman, bearing the astounding name of Tamoc Caspipina,[2] a student of Magdalen College, Oxford, who, having been sent to America for a couple of years, helps himself to kill the time by giving an account of the country and its people, in letters to such very desirable corre-

[1] For these dates, excepting for the first one, I depend on Sabin. To the first English reprint, was added a life of William Penn; and it was from this reprint that the German translation was made: "Briefe, welche Beobachtungen über verschiedene Gegenstande der Literatur, Religion, und Moral enthalten, nebst dem Leben des Herren Penn. Aus dem Englischen. Læipzig: 1778."

[2] An acrostic upon the full title of the office which Duché then held: "The Assistant Minister of Christ Church and St. Peter's in Philadelphia in North America."

spondents as "The Right Honorable Lord Viscount P.," "Lady Caroline S.," and "The Lord Bishop of B——l." The prevailing tone of the letters is one of refinement, gentility, devoutness; of unswerving deference to the English Church and the English aristocracy; with a genial forbearance towards almost everything in America—except Methodism. This precious and mealy-mouthed Caspipina seems to be a well-developed prig; his observations are wholly without keenness, depth, or force; and though treating of personal and social topics in a new country, it seems never to occur to him that the grandiose solemnity of his platitudes might sometimes be qualified by a stroke of satire, or a ripple of mirth.

VI.

Jacob Green, a graduate of Harvard College in 1744, was molded for the Christian ministry under the influence of Whitefield and Gilbert Tennent, and for the last forty-five years of his life was pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Hanover, New Jersey. An early and a fearless champion of the doctrine of American Independence, he not only preached it from his pulpit, but published a pamphlet[1] in support of it—at a time, too, when any general approval of the doctrine was doubtful. His parish held an exposed

[1] I state this on the testimony of his son, Ashbel Green, in Sprague, "Annals," etc., iii. 138, where he does not mention the title of the pamphlet. Elsewhere, however, he attempts to give the title from memory, but without being confident of his own accuracy, as "Observations on the Present Controversy between Great Britain and Her American Colonies." Quoted in Hildeburn, "Issues of the Pennsylvania Press," ii. 91, as from "Life of Ashbel Green," 46. Hildeburn suggests that the pamphlet referred to, may have been the one published at Philadelphia, in 1769, entitled, "The Controversy between Great Britain and her Colonies Reviewed," etc. On the other hand, Mr. Franklin Burdge has suggested that Green's pamphlet may be the one published in Philadelphia, in 1776, entitled "Observations on the Reconciliation of Great Britain and the Colonies." From internal evidence, as I think, neither of these pamphlets could have been by Jacob Green; neither takes the side of the controversy which his son declares that he took.

situation; yet through the entire period of the war, and amid many perils and hardships, he remained undauntedly at his post; and in all that time of anguish, even as before and afterward, he wrought strongly, according to the light that was in him, on behalf of every interest of man. His most notable publication was "A Vision of Hell: and a Discovery of Some of the Consultations and Devices there, in the Year 1767."[1] In spite of what might be inferred from its title, this little book has no immediate reference to earthly politics, being, in fact, a very animated report of a conference, apparently overheard by the writer, between Satan and the other big devils, touching the outlook for their business in this world, especial emphasis being laid by them on the impediments just then presented to their favorite work of catching souls.

VII.

To some of the patriotic preachers it seemed a shocking impiety that people in so hard a stress of toil and danger as were the Americans, should have any disposition to indulge in the frivolous and baleful device of dancing. For example, Oliver Hart, for thirty years pastor of the Baptist Church in Charleston, South Carolina, was stirred to indignation and grief that in his own city, enveloped as it then was by storm-clouds of calamity, this saltatory abomination was not only "revived," but was "attended to in a frantic manner, at a time when everything in Providence is calling us to different exercises. The judgments of God are now opened over the land, and the inhabitants ought to learn righteousness. The alarm of war, the clangor of arms, the garments rolled in blood, the sufferings of our brethren in the Northern States and of others in a state of captivity, together with the late dreadful conflagration in this town,

[1] The true authorship of this brochure is disguised under the pseudonym of Theodorus Van Shermain. I found a copy of it in the Congregational Library, Boston.

are so many loud calls to repentance, reformation of life, and prayer that the wrath of God may be turned away from us. Instead of which, we are smothered up in pleasure and dissipation. It will hardly be credited that the fire was scarcely extinguished in Charleston, before we had balls, assemblies, and dances in every quarter, and even in some of those houses which miraculously escaped the flames. . . . Is it thus we requite the Lord for our deliverance? The monumental ruins of the town will rise up in judgment against the inhabitants, and condemn them for such impieties. . . . I am no prophet, nor the son of a prophet, and yet will venture to predict that other and perhaps greater judgments will yet light upon us unless we repent."[1] Accordingly, on the 22d of March, 1778, he preached a sermon, blazing with the pure old Puritan fire, entitled "Dancing Exploded: a Sermon shewing the Unlawfulness, Sinfulness, and Bad Consequences of Balls, Assemblies, and Dances in General."

In October, 1779, the eloquent army chaplain, Israel Evans, preaching at Easton, Pennsylvania, to a great throng of soldiers just back from a campaign against the Six Nations, spoke out, like an old Hebrew prophet, against the apathy and immorality then so prevalent among his own countrymen, and their appalling decline in patriotism: "Alas, the spirit of liberty is now rather struggling with the vicious manners and the selfish principles of the times, than with the tyrant of Britain. The love of wealth and the pursuit of pleasure have almost extinguished that flame of patriotism which blazed forth with such ardor at the beginning of this war. Virtue and patriotism, the guardians of liberty, are in many places and by many men made the subject of scorn and contempt, and that by those who would be esteemed wise politicians and friends to their country. . . . A republic without virtue is an absurdity

[1] Part of the Preface to his sermon, "Dancing Exploded," 1778. My quotation is made from the reprint given in "The Patriot Preachers of the American Rev.," 232–257.

in politics, and can no more stand than a building when the foundation is removed." [1]

VIII.

Upon the opening of the military campaign under Washington in the spring of 1777, there appeared among the Pennsylvania troops a young chaplain named Hugh Henry Brackenridge,[2] tall and commanding in person, with the voice, the eye, and the soul of an orator: so penetrated, likewise, by the passion of rage against the enemy and of zeal to destroy him, that his sermons—so far as now known to us—seem to have breathed almost every sort of sentiment excepting such as would remind one of the Sermon on the Mount.

The personal history of this young chaplain had already been an interesting one, and was characteristic of the fiery, aspiring, and indomitable spirit within him. Born in Scotland in 1748, he was brought to America when but five years of age. So poor were his parents that the cost of the sea-voyage had taken their last penny; and on leaving the ship the father had sold the very coat from off his back in order to buy bread and procure conveyance out into the woods of York County, Pennsylvania, beyond the Susquehanna. This little boy, Hugh, not at all lacking in the usual boy-appetite for bread, very soon gave evidence of an unusual appetite for knowledge and of a marvelous precocity and indefatigableness in acquiring it. He would sometimes trudge thirty miles to Fogg's Manor to procure a book, and on coming home would read it in the long winter evening, by the light of burning chips and splinters.

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[1] "A Discourse," etc., 25–26.

[2] In his earliest acknowledged publication, and in an advertisement of his school in 1778, his middle name was given as Montgomery. Subsequently, he dropped this name, and took that of Henry. The best biographical account of him which I have met with is by his son, Henry Marie Brackenridge, originally printed in "The Southern Literary Messenger"; reprinted in the elder Brackenridge's prose satire, "Modern Chivalry," ed. 1846, Appendix.

He bargained with a neighboring clergyman for lessons in Latin and Greek, in return for personal labor. Afterward he bargained with a young man near by for lessons in mathematics, in return for his own lessons in Latin and Greek. Thus, by the time he had reached the age of fifteen years, he was ready to set up as a public teacher of those several branches of knowledge. After due examination, he was given the appointment of teacher to a free-school at Gunpowder Falls in Maryland,—a school having in it a number of young men older and bigger than himself. Of these, one very soon came to think that it would be fine to try issues with their stripling-pedagogue, and, accordingly offering him some impertinence, defied his authority. Of course, to young Brackenridge it was quite plain that that particular question of authority was the very one which needed to be settled then and there to the satisfaction of all concerned; and without waste of time or words, he seized a burning stick from the fire, and with it smote his hulk of an antagonist such a blow as felled him to the floor—thereby convincing him and the rest of the school that their new master had valid credentials to teach and to rule in that place. After a peaceful reign among them for several years, Brackenridge gathered up his small earnings, and marched away to Princeton College, where President Witherspoon had just entered upon his duties, and where the young man was enabled to arrange for a part payment of costs, by himself undertaking to teach classes in the college for two hours a day. While giving to the President some account of his own life thus far, he happened to quote the familiar words of Juvenal:

> "Haud facile emergunt, quorum virtutibus obstat
> Res angusta domi";[1]

whereupon Witherspoon finely replied,—"There you are wrong, young man! it is only your 'res-angusta-domi'-men that do emerge."

[1] Juvenalis Saturarum Liber Primus, iii. 164–165.

Having among his classmates James Madison and Philip Freneau—with whom his friendship seems to have become a life-long influence—he took his bachelor's degree at Princeton in 1771. There, also, he remained for some time after graduation, serving as college-tutor, studying divinity, receiving likewise his license as a preacher. He then went back to Maryland and took charge of an academy on the Eastern Shore; and it was while thus engaged that, in 1776, he wrote for his pupils the tragedy of "The Battle of Bunker's Hill."[1] As public disasters thickened, and the paths of the fighting-men became more and more beset with bafflement and anguish, it was not unlike Brackenridge to turn his back upon his far-off school, and make his way to the camp—there to partake with the troops in all the allotments of fate, to the endurance of which they were to be helped by his strong and thrilling speech and his undaunted bearing.

Then it was that he composed for them the "Six Political Discourses Founded on the Scripture," which, in 1778, were given forth in print to all who cared to read them; the range and method of which may partly be guessed from their titles: "The Bloody Vestiges of Tyranny," "The Nature and Artifice of Toryism," "The Fate of Tyranny and Toryism," "The Agency of Heaven in the Cause of Liberty," "The Blasphemy of Gasconade and Self-Dependence in a Certain General," "The Great Wrath of the Tyrant and the Cause of it." These discourses do indeed announce themselves as "Founded on the Scripture." It may be so; but it is chiefly to Old Testament Scripture that the reference must be meant, and particularly to those portions of it which recite the slaughter of the Canaanites by Joshua, the pitiless deed of Jael the wife of Heber, the imprecations of the Psalmist David, the fierce valor and terribleness of the Maccabees.

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[1] Published in 1776, and followed in 1777 by his tragedy of "The Death of General Montgomery." For an account of these tragedies, the reader is referred to Chapter xxxii. on "The Dramatic Literature of the Revolution."

Thus, the first discourse, entitled "The Bloody Vestiges of Tyranny," was written and spoken just after the rout and slaughter of our men at the battle of Brandywine, and is a weird rhythmic chant of rage and patriotic hate and vengeance. Taking for his text a part of the eleventh of Jude: "Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain," he proceeds to name one by one the several renowned successors of him who was "first in the line of murderers"[1]—Nimrod, Pharaoh, Ahab, the Alexanders, the Jenghis Khans, the Tamerlanes. These he then passes by. "I leave behind me," he adds, "all that is related of the Hun, the Vandal, or the Goth, and all the cruel, persecuting, and bloody princes and people in more modern times, when Europe floated as one sea of blood. I pass them by, and hasten on, for I have an object of greater wickedness in view,—an object of such accomplished fraud, perfidy, and murder, that every one heretofore mentioned is lost and disappears. I mean him of England—the fierce, cruel, unrelenting, and bloody king of Britain."[2] Thus, arraigning that poor, dull-witted, obstinate, conscientious and religious George the Third, as the ultimate and supreme successor of the first murderer and the first fratricide, he goes on to sketch, with tremendous power both in outline and in color, a picture of the havoc upon human nature wrought in America by this wicked king's messengers: "Let the town of Boston be witness to their cruelty,—the town of Boston, with the cries of infants, and the groans of distressed mothers. . . . Let the heights of Canada, and the environs of Quebec, call to mind, and publish, the bloody vestiges of tyranny in that unhappy country. . . . From the heights of Canada to the distant barrier of Fort Sullivan, let the intermediate States give in remembrance to remotest times, what they have suffered from the Hessian ravisher, and from the inroad of the cruel Englishman wasting their plantations. Let the Jersey State be witness to their vestiges! Let the blood of Haslet on the plain of

[1] "Six Political Discourses," 5–6. [2] Ibid. 7.

Princeton cry aloud to God for a day of retribution. Let the fourteen wounds of Mercer with the bayonet point, on the same victorious eminence, open their dumb mouths afresh, and cry aloud for justice."[1] But the cruelties of these invaders "are now transacted on our own plains. They have landed—they have traveled through a part of the adjacent country—they have burned dwelling houses—they have destroyed provision and the means of life—they have tortured for money those whom they suspected of possessing it—they have driven the peaceful inhabitants from their places of abode—they have violated the chastity of women who fell into their hands—they are bending on and breathing slaughter to the whole state. They meditate destruction at the risk of their own lives. It is their determination to destroy or to perish. Rather than suffer us to live, they will cease to live themselves. . . . Can anything be more diabolical, . . . more in the spirit of the first-born Cain?"[2]

And this voice of the prophet, as it begins with words of imprecation denounced upon the enemies of American peace and freedom, how shall it do otherwise than end in the same manner? "Woe unto them, for they have rejected the frequency and humility of our petitions. They have rejected them with a fierce disdain. They have been deaf to all entreaty, and the softest words of soft expostulation. They have pursued, without remorse, the dire intention to destroy us. They have pursued it in a cruel manner. They have warred with a rage unknown to civilized nations. They have mangled the bodies of our heroes on the field of battle. They have defaced our colleges and schools of learning. They have burned houses of religious worship. They have stabbed and shed the blood of an unarmed and supplicating clergyman. This they have done to persons of the same language and religion with themselves. Woe unto them, for they have shed a brother's blood. They have gone in the way of Cain."[3] Moreover,

[1] "Six Political Discourses," 12. [2] Ibid. 13. [3] Ibid. 13–15.

" let us be careful to recollect and commemorate their conduct. Let every class of men join to execrate the tyrant, and the tyranny, and to rank the George of England with the Cains and the murderers of mankind. Let fathers teach their sons the degenerate nature,—and the name of Englishmen,—let mothers still with this the children on the breast, and make the name a bugbear. In thought, in word, let indignation have a place; but chiefly in our actions, let strong resentment shew itself. Let the aged father send his son to battle, with cheerfulness and resignation. Let the wife permit her husband, and perplex him not with womanish exclamation, or with tears. Let the soldier in the field—and to such I principally address myself—let the soldier in the field behave with fortitude. Let him forget the effeminacy of a tender and luxurious life. Let him summon up the blood—give indignation to the visage—and let the spirit of resentment flash from the enraged eye. Let him, in obedience to his orders, shew himself steady—in execution of them prompt—in every enterprise undaunted. Let the arm be stretched with vigor, and give full revenge its scope. Duty, honor, and the love of virtue calls to battle. A bleeding and a ravished country calls to battle. The wounded soldier and the dying hero calls to battle. The voice of the brigades so lately [1] injured by superior numbers, calls to battle. The happiness and glory of the rising generations, calls to battle. Let every man give audience to the voice. Let every man become a soldier. Let every soldier acquit himself as valiant. Let him determine victory or death. Let him be of the mind to fight from hill to hill, from vale to vale, and on every plain, until the enemy is driven back, and forced to depart,—until the tyrant shall give up his claim, and be obliged to confess that free men, that Americans, are not to be subdued." [2]

IX.

Probably no other American preacher of the Revolutionary time united in so high a degree the talents and accom-

[1] At Brandywine.

[2] " Six Political Discourses," 15–16.

plishments suited to his sacred calling, with those suited to the clever man of the world, as did Samuel Cooper, born in Boston in 1724, and from 1744 until his death in 1783, pastor of the Brattle Street Church.[1] Of a noble commanding person, with a voice of great melody and power, a manner of speech full of animation and grace, with personal ways at once courtly, genial, and captivating, he acquired almost from his youth an extraordinary hold upon the admiration and confidence of the community to which he ministered,—a community then swayed by the traditions of clerical leadership. In his day, also, he had great distinction on account of his literary gifts; and to his contemporaries, it seemed no exaggeration to say, that by his "accurate taste, the brilliancy of his imagination, and the clearness of his judgment," he had "adorned and enriched the republic of letters."[2] It comported with his character, likewise, for him to be intimate with men prominent in all the great doings of the world—in science, letters, commerce, politics, war; to have an active part in managing the affairs of his own country, both before and during the Revolution; to represent his own city, likewise, in gracious attentions to distinguished visitors; in short, to be guide, philosopher, and friend to all men, both for this world and for the next.

According to the fashion of the time among men of position and influence, he was a constant writer for the newspapers, dealing with current topics in every sphere of interest. Perhaps nothing that he did in this way is more commonly cited than an essay called "The Crisis," published in 1754, in opposition to a proposal for a colonial excise.[3] During

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[1] The best accounts of Cooper I have met with, are by two of his contemporaries: John Clarke, in a sermon preached at his funeral, published in Boston, 1784; and John Eliot, in "A Biographical Dictionary," 129–133. Other sources of information concerning him are given in Sprague, "Annals," etc., i., 440–444, especially in note to page 440.

[2] John Clarke, "Sermon at Interment of Cooper," 16–17.

[3] After all, the most notable thing about this pamphlet of Cooper's, is that it anticipates the title made renowned by Thomas Paine twenty-two years later. Oddly enough, Cushing, in "Anonyms," attributes to Cooper the English pamphlet called "The Crisis," published in London in 1766, which, I think, was

the controversies of the Revolution, he is said to have written for the "Boston Gazette" many of the most trenchant articles that appeared in that fearless and influential journal.

His published discourses,[1] though not so numerous as those of several of his contemporaries, are sufficient to preserve for us his chief traits as a sermon-writer: affluence and grace of diction, sincerity of tone, vivacity, impressiveness, the note of social amenity and of worldly wisdom, with frequent applications of his thought to the great political and military events of the day. Of these discourses, by far the ablest is the one preached by him, in 1780, before the governor and legislature of Massachusetts, on the inauguration of the new government of that State under its first written constitution,—an occasion worthy of the speech of a political philosopher. Cooper uses it like one; and while he is not lacking in the congratulations and compliments demanded by the great fact which had brought together that assemblage, he ministers to them something always more needful than congratulations or compliments. "Nations who are jealous of their own liberties," he warns them, "often sport with those of others."[2] Exultant and proud aspirations for national greatness,—so natural among any people near the victorious close of a vast and perilous struggle such as theirs had been,—he does not discourage among his countrymen. Nay, he insists upon such aspirations; but he likewise requires of his countrymen a high conception of the nature and of the obligations of that national greatness to which he would have them aspire. "It is

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never before spoken of as Cooper's; but fails to mention this American pamphlet called "The Crisis," which, I think, has always been understood to be Cooper's.

[1] I have made note of only eight discourses by Samuel Cooper, all of which I examined at the Congregational Library, Boston:—Artillery Sermon, 1751; Industry Sermon, 1753; Election Sermon, 1756; Quebec Sermon, 1759; Ordination Sermon, 1760; Sermon on Death of George II., 1761; Dudleian Lecture, 1773; Sermon at Inauguration of the new government of Massachusetts, 1780.

[2] "A Sermon," etc., 15.

laudable," he tells them, "to lay the foundations of our republics with extended views. . . . Conquest is not indeed the aim of these rising States—sound policy must ever forbid it. We have before us an object more truly great and honorable. We seem called by Heaven to make a large portion of this globe a seat of knowledge and liberty, of agriculture, commerce and arts, and, what is more important than all, of Christian piety and virtue. . . . Our mountains, our rivers and lakes, have a singular air of dignity and grandeur. May our conduct correspond to the face of our country. At present, an immense part of it lies as nature hath left it; and human labor and art have done but little, and brightened only some small specks of a continent that can afford ample means of subsistence to many, many millions of the human race. It remains with us and our posterity . . . to establish the honor and happiness of this new world, as far as it may be justly our own, and to invite the injured and oppressed, the worthy and the good, to these shores, by the most liberal governments, by wise political institutions, by cultivating the confidence and friendship of other nations, and by a sacred attention to that Gospel that breathes 'peace on earth, and good will towards men.' Thus will our country resemble the new city which St. John saw 'coming down from God out of Heaven, adorned as a bride for her husband.' Is there a benevolent spirit on earth or on high, whom such a prospect would not delight? But what are those illustrious forms that seem to hover over us on the present great occasion, and to look down with pleasure on the memorable transactions of this day? Are they not the founders and law-givers, the skilful pilots and brave defenders of free states, . . . who thought no toils or vigilance too great to establish and protect the rights of human nature, no riches too large to be exchanged for them, no blood too precious to be shed for their redemption? But who are they who seem to approach nearer to us, and in whose countenances we discern a peculiar mixture of gravity and

joy upon this solemnity? Are they not the venerable Fathers of the Massachusetts, who though not perfect while they dwelt in flesh, were yet greatly distinguished by an ardent piety, by all the manly virtues, and by an unquenchable love of liberty,—they who, to form a retreat for it, crossed the ocean, through innumerable difficulties, to a savage land,—they who brought with them a broad charter of liberty, over which they wept when it was wrenched from them by the hand of power, and an insidious one placed in its room? With what pleasure do they seem to behold their children, like the ancient seed of Abraham, this day restored to their original foundations of freedom,—their governor 'as at the first, and their counselors as at the beginning'? Do they not seem to call upon us to defend these foundations at every hazard, and to perpetuate their honor in the liberty and virtue of the state they planted?"[1]

X.

On the 14th of November, 1781, the people of Brookfield, Massachusetts, came together in formal assemblage to express their joy over "the capture of Lord Cornwallis and his whole army"; and, as was fitting, their own pastor, Nathan Fiske, a man of uncommon literary gifts, stood forth and spoke to them at large of the great event. "What a radiance will this struggle for liberty, which has produced such exertions of genius and prowess, throw around America! 'T is enough to make us proud of our country and to glory in the name of Americans; yea, even to make it criminal to be destitute of pride." "Happy country! the scene of such wonders, the nurse of such heroes, the defender of liberty, and the care of Jehovah. . . . Soon, we trust, will commence the era of our quiet enjoyment of those liberties which our fathers purchased with the toil of

[1] "A Sermon, October 25, 1780, on the Commencement of the Constitution and Inauguration of the New Government," 52–55.

their whole lives, with their treasure, with their blood. Safe from the enemy of the wilderness, safe from the griping hand of arbitrary sway, here shall be the late-founded seat of peace and freedom. Here shall arts and sciences, the companions of tranquillity, flourish. Here shall dwell uncorrupted faith, the pure worship of God in its primitive simplicity — unawed, unrestrained, uninterrupted. Here shall religion and liberty extend their benign influences to savage, enslaved, and benighted nations. How can we forbear rejoicing in such happy prospects! . . . But the blessing is too divine, the joy is too great—too sacred, to be affronted by profaneness, or polluted and debased by sensuality." [1]

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[1] "An Oration," etc., 6–8. The chief literary activity of Nathan Fiske belongs to the years following the period here under view. He was a man of great note in his time,—strong, broad, brilliant, and loveable. Born in 1733, he became pastor in Brookfield in 1758, and so remained as long as he lived. A wide and eager reader, an impressive speaker, a writer of rare pith and skill; disliking metaphysics in the pulpit, and controversy everywhere; refined, benevolent, affable; a leader and laborer in every practical work for the good of his fellow-creatures; himself a man of joy, and frowning not at joy in others —even when expressed in certain harmless amusements previously under ban; it may be said of him that he lived in this world the life of a sane and friendly man, and died the death of one. On Sunday, November 24, 1799, he preached to his people from the text, Prov., iv., 18: "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Having for forty-one years given in his own life among the same people a clear illustration of that text, he was permitted to let the record close victoriously at that point; for that same night, in his bed at home, he slept the eternal sleep. In any account of American Literature between 1783 and 1800, Nathan Fiske deserves a permanent place, especially for his many essays fashioned somewhat upon the plan of "The Spectator" and published in "The Massachusetts Spy" and in "The Massachusetts Magazine." After his death, about one hundred and fifty of these essays were culled out and republished in two volumes under the title of "The Moral Monitor." Sketches of this man, who is not unworthy of some sort of literary resurrection, may be seen in Sprague, "Annals," i., 573–574; "Monthly Anthology," i., 639–642; J. I. Foot, "Hist. Disc."; and especially in the first vol. of "The Moral Monitor." In "Appletons' Cycl. of Am. Biog.," this Nathan Fiske is made to be the father of Professor Nathan Welby Fiske of Amherst College, and the grandfather of Helen Fiske, who became Helen Hunt Jackson. Doubtless these two people were quite worthy of such an ancestor; but Nature did not happen to arrange it so.

XI.

In the Spring of the year immediately following the surrender of Cornwallis, the election sermon in Massachusetts was preached by Zabdiel Adams, a cousin of John Adams, gifted with the energy of mind and the boldness in act and utterance characteristic of that clan. Having in view the achievements of the war, and likewise the uncertainty which then beclouded its close, he urged his fellow-countrymen to remain firm, to yield to no illusions, to think nothing gained till all was gained, to be ready for any labors or sacrifices that might still await them in their long battle for Independence. "We are now," said he, "in sight of the promised land. How humiliating it would be to have our Independence, just brought to the birth, fail for want of strength to be delivered!" "Expense is not to be regarded in a contest of such magnitude. What can possibly be a compensation for our liberties? It is better to be free among the dead, than slaves among the living. The ghosts of our friends slain in war, the spirits of our illustrious ancestors long since gone to rest, . . . a regard to children still unborn,—all call upon us to make greater exertions, and will rise up in judgment against us, if through cowardice we desert the noble cause in which for many years past we have been engaged."[1]

XII.

Nathaniel Whitaker, for many years pastor of a congregation in Salem, Massachusetts, an able and a good man, was, however, as a Revolutionary politician little less than ferocious,—for the reason that he had succeeded in sanctifying his own hatred of the American Tories by discovering a close resemblance between them and certain children of evil in the Old Testament on whom had fallen the wrath of God and the curses of the prophets. Thus, the only sermons of

[1] "Mass. Election Sermon," 57, 59.

his which attained to any note during those years, were two in exposition and championship of this gospel of implacable hate.

The first of these sermons, preached in 1777, was "An Antidote against Toryism; or, the Curse of Meroz."[1] Condensing his thought into these few fine words of savagery—"Cursed be he that holdeth back his hand from blood"—he sees in the conduct of the Tories, who refused to draw the sword in the cause of the Revolution, precisely the crime which should bring down upon their heads that appalling imprecation. Their crime, bad enough in itself, had these two aggravations: that it was a violation of the laws of nature; and that it was also a sin against posterity. When dealing with the latter aspect of it, he says: "What a scene opens to view! Behold these delightful and stately mansions for which we labored, possessed by the minions of power. See yonder spacious fields, subdued to fruitfulness by the sweat and toil of our fathers or ourselves, yielding their increase to clothe, pamper, and enrich the tyrant's favorites, who are base enough to assist him in his cursed plots to enslave us. Does this rouse your resentment? Stop a moment, and I 'll show you a spectacle more shocking than this. What meagre visages do I see in yonder field, toiling and covered with sweat to cultivate the soil? Who are those in rags, bearing burdens and drawing water for these haughty lords, and then cringing to them for a morsel of bread? They are—(O gracious God! support my spirits)—they are my sons, and my daughters, . . . loaded with irons and dragging after them, wherever they go, the heavy, galling, ignominious chains of slavery! But, may we not hope for an end of these miseries? Alas, what hope? Slavery debases the human faculties, and spreads a torpor and stupidity over the whole frame. They sink in despair under their load. They see no way, they feel no power, to recover themselves from this pit of misery, but pine away, and die in it, and leave to their children the

[1] Published, Newburyport, 1777.

same wretched inheritance. What, then, does he deserve, or, rather, what curse is too heavy for the wretch, that can tamely see our country enslaved ?" [1]

Again, in May, 1783, as the peace drew near, and with it the danger of some softening of the American heart toward the Tories, this apostle of political vindictiveness once more in his pulpit sought to stir and to blow into flame the embers of the popular wrath against those unhappy people. His sermon, entitled "The Reward of Toryism," [2] was an elaborate and a red-hot argument for the expulsion of the Tories from the country, or their exclusion from all political privileges within it. "The Tories of these States, whether still residing among us or gone over to the enemy, are guilty of the sin of Meroz." "It is the command of God that in cursing we curse them." [3]

XIII.

The eleventh of December, 1783, had been designated by Congress as a day of thanksgiving for the double blessing of Peace and Independence. Accordingly, at the Congregational Church in Roxbury, Massachusetts, the day was greeted by an assemblage of citizens over whose faces was spread "an appearance of undissembled joy." Their minister, Eliphalet Porter, then but twenty-five years of age and at the beginning of a pastorate which lasted more than fifty years, touched with a strong hand the chords of public gratitude and of jubilant national confidence. "It is no common event, no vulgar occasion," said he, "that now calls for our gratitude. Not only the common mercies of the last revolving year, but the favorable interposition of Providence on our behalf through a long and tedious conflict with a powerful enemy, the maintenance of our rights and liberties, the ultimate acknowledgement of our freedom, sovereignty, and Independence, a period to the calam-

[1] "An Antidote," etc., 24–25. [2] Published, Newburyport, 1783.
[3] "The Reward," etc., 9.

ities and the distresses of war, and the return of Peace—lovely Peace—with her attendant blessings, are the events we are this day called to celebrate. These are the events for which our hearts should expand with grateful joy. These are the events for which the united thousands of America are required this day, with one heart and one voice, to ascribe blessing and praise to the God of their salvation. And these, no doubt, are events for which the more numerous hosts on high—those lovers of peace, and well-wishers to mankind—give honor and glory to Him that sitteth on the throne, and who ruleth in the kingdom of men." [1]

At the Congregational Church in Medford, Massachusetts,—a town near to the very track taken by the British soldiers on their famous night-march to Lexington in 1775, —the young pastor, David Osgood, delivered a sermon [2] remarkable for its vigor both of thought and of expression, in which he retraced year by year the course of the long war; and portrayed its results in great civic blessings achieved or made possible.

In the city of New York, where, for local reasons, exultation over the peace was uncommonly fervent, John Rodgers, pastor of the old Wall Street Presbyterian Church, discoursed to his flock on "The Divine Goodness Displayed in the American Revolution,"—holding up to his fellow-countrymen the need of authenticating their professions of national gratitude by fidelity to all national obligations: "Would you reap the fruits of your toils, your losses and your blood, it is indispensably necessary that the federal union of these States be cemented and strengthened; that the honor of the great council of the nation be supported, and its salutary measures carried into execution, with unanimity and despatch, without regard to partial views or local interests; that the credit of this new empire be established on the principles of the strictest justice; and its faith maintained sacred and inviolable, in whatever way or to

[1] "Sermon," 3–4.

[2] Published in Boston, 1784.

whatever description of persons it has been pledged, or may at any time be pledged." [1]

XIV.

Among the sturdiest and most vivacious of the Revolutionary preachers in the middle colonies was George Duffield, a Presbyterian pastor, born in 1732, of Anglo-Irish and Huguenot ancestry, a graduate of Princeton in 1752, one of the party of "New Lights" in his denomination.[2] For the peculiar activities and perils of his career during the Revolution, he had received admirable preparation in his early ministry along the western frontier of Pennsylvania, where the onsets of the Indians were just then so frequent as to compel all the male members of his flock to go armed, and where he himself often accompanied his parishioners upon their military raids. At one of his preaching-places, also, the meeting-house had to be surrounded by fortifications, behind which the stout-hearted pastor was accustomed to minister to his people, while their sentinels were standing upon the ramparts to give warning of the approach of the enemy.[3] Acquiring renown for zeal, eloquence, and intrepidity, he accepted, about the year 1766, the pastorate of the Third Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia,—a position which he continued to hold until his death in 1790.

His stanch opinions touching the great dispute, and the boldness with which he proclaimed them, drew to his church many of the leaders of the Revolutionary movement, who, perhaps, in their admiration for his politics, were disposed to waive any objections that they may have had to his theology; and in great crises of the struggle—in days alike of disaster and of triumph—they flocked to his

[1] "A Sermon," etc., as reprinted in "The Patriot Preachers of the Am. Rev.," 340.

[2] Sketch of Duffield, by his grandson, George Duffield of Detroit, in Sprague, "Annals," etc., iii., 186–192. Also, S. D. Alexander, "Princeton College," etc., 17.

[3] Sprague, "Annals," etc., iii., 187–188.

services for the good cheer and the guidance they found in his undaunted faith and in his thrilling words. Thus, on the 11th of June, 1775, in the midst of the popular emotion following the events of Lexington and Concord and preceding those of Bunker Hill, John Adams, then in attendance upon the Continental Congress at Philadelphia, wrote home to his wife some account of this notable man: "I have been this morning to hear Mr. Duffield, a preacher in this city, whose principles, prayers, and sermons more nearly resemble those of our New England clergy than any that I have heard. His discourse was a kind of exposition on the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah. America was the wilderness, and the solitary place, and he said it would be glad, 'rejoice and blossom as the rose.' He labored 'to strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees.' He 'said to them that were of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.' . . . He applied the whole prophecy to this country, and gave us as animating an entertainment as I ever heard. He filled and swelled the bosom of every hearer."[1] About six weeks afterward, Adams wrote again of this Whig John Knox, whom he had evidently taken to his heart: "This day I have heard my parish priest, Mr. Duffield, from 2 Chronicles, xv., 1, 2. This gentleman never fails to adapt his discourse to the times. He pressed upon his audience the necessity of piety and virtue, in the present times of adversity, and held up to their view the army before Boston as an example. . . . You may well suppose that this language was exceedingly pleasing to me."[2]

On the arrival of the enemy near New York in the summer of 1776, Duffield served as chaplain in the American army gathered there to oppose them; and, on one occasion, for lack of a more convenient pulpit, he climbed into a tree, and, supporting himself upon its forks, preached to the

[1] "Familiar Letters of John Adams and His Wife," etc., 65.

[2] Ibid., 90.

men until a shot from the enemy, crashing through the branches, suggested to him and his congregation the propriety of retiring behind a neighboring hillock for the completion of their religious exercises.[1] He is said to have remained with the army during the whole of the disastrous campaign of the autumn of 1776[2]; after which, hurrying back to Philadelphia, he resumed his duties to his own congregation there. His stay with them at that time was very soon interrupted; for just before Washington's celebrated attack upon the enemy at Trenton, Duffield publicly "rebuked his people because there were so many men in the house, saying there 'would be one less to-morrow, and no lecture on Wednesday evening.'"[3]

Late in the summer of the following year, in the midst of the alarm of Congress over the impending movement of General Howe upon Philadelphia, John Adams witnessed the march of General Washington and his army through that town in the direction of the foe,—a scene which he at once described in a letter to his wife, adding these words: "After viewing this fine spectacle and firm defence, I went to Mr. Duffield's meeting to hear him pray, as he did most fervently, and I believe he was most sincerely joined by all present, for its success."[4] Upon the flight of Congress from Philadelphia to York,—a place less accessible to the enemy,—Duffield served as one of its chaplains, in which capacity he had the honor to draw upon himself the lightning of the Tory satirist, Odell, in this flash of verse:

"A saint of old, as learned monks have said,
Preached to the fish—the fish his voice obeyed.
The same good man convened the grunting herd—
Who bowed obedient to his pow'rful word.
Such energy had truth, in days of yore;
Falsehood and nonsense, in our days, have more.

[1] Sprague, "Annals," etc. iii., 190–191.
[2] Ibid. 191.
[3] R. Webster, "Presb. Church in America," 672.
[4] "Familiar Letters," etc. 298.

Duffield avows them to be all in all,
And mounts or quits the pulpit, at their call.
In vain 'New Light' displays her heavenly shine,
In vain attract him oracles divine:
Chaplain of Congress give him to become,
Light may be dark, and oracles be dumb.
It pleased Saint Anthony to preach to brutes—
To preach to devils best with Duffield suits."[1]

By temperament, he was an orator rather than a writer; and the verbal form of his discourses was usually the work of the instant in which they were spoken. Only one production of his seems to have found its way into print,[2]—a sermon preached in his own church on the 11th of December, 1783, the day of national thanksgiving for deliverance and peace. This discourse has all the marks of direct and vivid oral address. Its topics are the obvious ones for such an occasion; and, as might be expected, it has the usual exultant forecast of the era of imperial liberty and happiness for mankind then about to begin under the ægis of the victorious American Republic: "Here has our God erected a banner of civil and religious liberty, and prepared an asylum for the poor and oppressed from every part of the earth. Here, if wisdom guide our affairs, shall a happy equality reign; and joyous freedom bless the inhabitants wide and far, from age to age. Here, far removed from the noise and tumult of contending kingdoms and empires, far from the wars of Europe and Asia and the barbarous African coast, here shall the husbandman enjoy the fruits of his labor; the merchant trade, secure of his gain; the mechanic

[1] "The Loyalist Poetry," etc. 40–41.

[2] In the best existing sketch of Duffield, it is said that "he published an account of his tour with Mr. Beatty along the frontiers of Pennsylvania." Sprague, "Annals," etc. iii. 192. I have met with no such publication. There was published in London in 1768 "The Journal of a Two Months' Tour with a View of promoting Religion among the Frontier Inhabitants of Pennsylvania." This little book was by Charles Beatty, who frequently mentions Duffield as his companion and co-worker in the tour.

indulge his inventive genius; and the sons of science pursue their delightful employment, till the light of knowledge pervade yonder yet uncultivated western wilds, and form the savage inhabitants into men." [1]

[1] "A Sermon at Third Presbyterian Church," etc. 16–17. These sentences are taken from the original edition of the sermon, published in 1784. A reprint of the entire sermon may be seen in "The Patriot Preachers of the American Revolution," 344–368.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THREE ACADEMIC PREACHERS AND PUBLICISTS.

I.—William Smith, Provost of the College of Philadelphia—His many discourses on occasions of state—"On the Duties of the Christian Soldier"—"On the Present Situation of American Affairs," June 23, 1775—His retirement at the approach of Independence—His discourses in the latter part of the Revolution—His quality as a writer.

II.—John Witherspoon, President of the College of New Jersey—His arrival in America in 1768, and prompt identification of himself with the nobler moods of American society—Outline of his previous career—Éclat attending his entrance upon his work at the college.

III.—Witherspoon's fitness for the varied services that lay before him in his new position—His eminence as a preacher—The stimulus he gave to the development of the College of New Jersey.

IV.—Witherspoon's career as political writer and practical statesman—Enters Congress in June, 1776—Reasons for his great influence in that body—His sermons on public questions—His miscellaneous political writings, grave and humorous.

V.—Witherspoon's treatment of the leading questions then in dispute—Special value of his writings on public finance—He forsees the perils that were to follow American Independence.

VI.—Ezra Stiles, President of Yale College—His ambition for universal scholarship.

VII.—Stiles's numerous unpublished writings—His few published writings—His lack of ability in sustained literary expression—His defects in literary taste.

VIII.—Estimate of Stiles's services to civilization in America—His attitude toward the chief tendencies of modern thought—His free-mindedness—His confidence in the victory of truth—His great charity—His sagacious judgments concerning secular affairs—In 1760 and 1761, he predicts the entire movement toward American union, Independence, and national development.

I.

A PREACHER of great celebrity in his day, in America as in England, was William Smith, the provost of the College

of Philadelphia, who, being without parochial duties, being also eminent in many spheres of intellectual activity, was many times brought forward for semi-sacred discourses upon occasions of political and military importance. Thus, in the spring and summer of 1768, in the Great Hall of the College of Philadelphia, he preached to the Royal Regiment of Ireland a series of five discourses [1] on the duties of the Christian soldier,—it being apparently supposed that some specimens of that rare kind of man were to be met with in the aforesaid regiment. Beyond all question, his most notable performance in political pulpit oratory was made on the twenty-third of June, 1775, two days after the departure of Washington to take command of the American forces at Cambridge, when the eloquent provost preached at Christ Church, and in the presence of the members of Congress, a sermon "On the Present Situation of American Affairs." [2] This sermon, which was addressed to the Third Battalion of Philadelphia Volunteers, contained the boldest words on the questions of the day, which had then been spoken in America from an Anglican pulpit, and brought upon its author an embarrassing amount of attention, whether laudatory or damnatory, from Dr. Priestly, Dr. Price, John Wesley, from "The Monthly Review," "The London Magazine," "The London Chronicle," "The Public Advertiser," and even from Junius himself.[3] About a month afterward, on July 20, 1775, for the first public fast proclaimed by Congress, this facile orator made still another appearance, preaching at All Saints' Church a sermon [4] which had the effect of an anti-climax,—for it was altogether lacking in definite application to any living problem, and indicated on the writer's part a staggering fear of the extreme courses into which many of his political associates

[1] "The Works of William Smith," ii. 179–250.

[2] Ibid. 251–286.

[3] An extended account of the contemporary praise and abuse of this sermon may be seen in "Preface to the First Edition" with supplementary materials, in "The Works of William Smith," ii. 252–264. The sermon itself follows: 265–286.

[4] Ibid. 112–126.

were getting ready to plunge. Soon, there came stalking to the front the issue of Independence,—in the presence of which this pulpit-orator shrank back into silence.[1] Thenceforward, no political word is any more heard proceeding out of his mouth, until, at his place of retirement in Maryland, he preaches a sermon for the public fast,[2] in May, 1781, and another for the public thanksgiving,[3] in December, of the same year.

There can be no doubt that the various pulpit harangues of Provost William Smith during the Revolution had, at the instant of their utterance, a sort of life and power, derived partly from the eloquent manner of the speaker, partly from the vitality of the great topics with which he in some fashion dealt—topics which already thrilled his hearers before he began to speak about them. Lacking such collateral force, it must be confessed that these printed reports of what he said seem now to be little else than well-dressed and orderly platoons of windy words.[4]

II.

Although John Witherspoon did not come to America until the year 1768,—after he had himself passed the middle line of human life,—yet so quickly did he then enter into the spirit of American society, so perfectly did he identify himself with its nobler moods of discontent and aspiration, so powerfully did he contribute by speech and act to the right development of this new nation out of the old cluster of dispersed and dependent communities, that it would be altogether futile to attempt to frame a just account of the great intellectual movements of our Revolution without

[1] As the conceded author of the "Letters of Cato," he did indeed have something to say against Independence.

[2] "The Works of William Smith," i. 127–140.

[3] Ibid. 141–154.

[4] The notable influence of William Smith as a preacher, teacher, writer, and man of miscellaneous activity, prior to 1765, has been treated of by me in "A History of American Literature during the Colonial Time," ii. 233–234.

taking some note of the part played in it by this eloquent, wise, and efficient Scotsman—at once teacher, preacher, politician, law-maker, and philosopher, upon the whole not undeserving of the praise which has been bestowed upon him as "one of the great men of the age and of the world."[1]

Born in 1722, in the parish of Yester, fourteen miles east of Edinburgh,—a parish of which his father was minister,—he was able upon his mother's side to trace his lineage, through an unbroken line of Presbyterian ministers, back to John Knox. That such a man should ever, in any country, come to lend his support to a system of rather bold conduct respecting royal personages in general, was hardly a thing to shock or surprise any single drop of blood in his body. At the age of twenty, he was graduated from the University of Edinburgh, where he had for associates Hugh Blair, James Robertson, and John Erskine. At the age of twenty-two, he became minister of the parish of Beith in the west of Scotland. At the age of thirty-four, he became pastor of the Low Church in Paisley. At the age of forty-six, after having declined calls to Presbyterian congregations in Dundee, Dublin, and Rotterdam, he accepted an invitation to the presidency of the College of New Jersey—an invitation which he had already declined two years before. At the time of his removal to America, therefore, he had achieved distinction as a preacher and an ecclesiastical leader. Even as an author, also, he had become well known, his chief publications, at that time, being "An Essay on Justification"; "A Practical Treatise on Regeneration"; "A Serious Enquriy into the Nature and Effects of the Stage"; a prose satire, called "Ecclesiastical Characteristics"; besides several volumes of sermons, and a collection of miscellaneous writings in three volumes, entitled "Essays on Important Subjects."[2]

[1] Sprague, "Annals," etc. iii. 289.

[2] The most of these publications, together with his later writings, are to be found in his collected "Works," of which two editions have appeared: the one in four volumes, Philadelphia, 1800-1801; the other in nine volumes, Edinburgh, 1804-1805. The latter is the edition used by me. For biographical

His advent to the college over which he was to preside was like that of a prince coming to his throne. From the moment of his landing in Philadelphia until that of his arrival in Princeton, his movements were attended by every circumstance that could manifest affection and homage; and on the evening of the day on which he made his entry into what was thenceforward to be his home, "the college edifice was brilliantly illuminated; and not only the whole village, but the adjacent country, and even the province at large, shared in the joy of the occasion."[1] It is pleasant to know that in the six-and-twenty years of public service that then lay before him in America, the person of whom so much was expected, not only did not disappoint, but by far exceeded, the high hopes that had thus been set upon him. For once in this world, as it turned out, a man of extraordinary force, versatility, and charm had found the place exactly suited to give full swing and scope to every element of power within him.

III.

He seems to have come at the right moment, to the right spot, in the right way. Being perhaps equally apt for thought and for action, and having quite remarkable gifts as preacher, debater, conversationalist, politician, and man of affairs, happily he found himself, in the fulness of his ripened powers, in a station of great dignity and prominence, near the centre of the new national life of America, in the midst of a kindred people just rousing themselves with fierce young energy to the tasks and risks of a stupendous crisis in their history. Thenceforth, whatsoever John

sketches of Witherspoon, the reader is referred to these editions of his "Works"; also, to the sermon preached at his funeral by John Rodgers, with a valuable appendix by Samuel Stanhope Smith; to J. Sanderson, "The Signers of the Declaration of Independence," v. 99–186; to Sprague, "Annals," etc. iii. 288–300. The article on Witherspoon, in "Appletons' Cyclopædia of American Biography," vi. 584–585, is worth attention.

[1] Sprague, "Annals," etc. iii. 292.

Witherspoon had it in him to do, in things sacred or secular, in life academic or practical, in the pulpit, in the provincial convention, in the Continental Congress, for the shaping, in war and peace, of the thought and character and destiny of this primitive, passionate, indomitable people, he then had the opportunity to do. That opportunity, so precious and so rare in the experience of men, he did not fail to use to the utmost.

Even in the exterior personal gifts which make for influence, he was not lacking. It was said of him that, with the exception of Washington, he had more of the quality called presence than, perhaps, any other man of his time in America. He was, moreover, kindly and companionable in private intercourse, and fascinated men by talk sparkling with anecdote, epigram, and repartee.

In the due order of things, his earliest appearance before the public was in the pulpit, which, to the very end of his career, continued to be the true seat and organ of his best activity and influence. Having the gift of easily remembering whatever he wrote, and of speaking naturally what he thus remembered, he was able to give to his sermons the double attraction of premeditated and of extemporaneous speech; and both for the matter and the manner of discourse, he soon took rank here as one of the foremost preachers of his time. As a contemporary of his has testified: "President Witherspoon's popularity as a preacher was great. The knowledge that he was to conduct a public service, usually filled the largest churches in our cities and populous towns, and he never failed to command the profound attention of his audience."[1] Notwithstanding the prodigious variety of those public and private engagements which were soon laid upon him, he maintained to the very end the supremacy of his sacred calling, and never, either by dress, or speech, or conduct, permitted his career as a civilian even to seem to involve any lapse or suspension of his character as a clergyman.

[1] Ashbel Green, in Sprague, "Annals," etc. iii. 299.

As the call that had brought him to America was the call to preside over the College of New Jersey, its interests very properly had the first claim upon his attention; and, before he had been long in charge of them, it became evident that, through him, the college was about to enter upon a new and a larger life. He addressed himself, first of all, to that need which is the primary, classic, and perennial need of every college fit to exist at all,—the need of money; and the extraordinary success he had therein was due partly to his own extraordinary energy and tact, and partly to the sheer confidence of the public in anything for which he chose to concern himself. He also brought about an enlargement of the curriculum by the introduction of new courses, particularly in Hebrew and in French; and through his own brilliant example as a lecturer on eloquence, history, philosophy, and divinity, he encouraged methods of instruction far more manly, vital, and stimulating than those previously in vogue there. Finally, his fame as a divine, and soon, also, as a statesmen and a patriot, continually added to the reputation of the college, and attracted to it during his time some of the brightest and noblest of American youths. Perhaps John Witherspoon was the first man among us to illustrate in a high degree the possibilities for influence to be found in this very modern and peculiar function of an American college president.

IV.

Before many years, also, as the struggle with the British ministry took on more and more of its tragic aspect, Witherspoon's labors as preacher and as college officer began to be overlaid by his labors as a political writer and a statesman. It has been well said of him that "he became an American the moment he landed on our shores"[1]; and, having quickly mastered the questions in dispute, he showed from the outset a rational, temperate, but unflinching sympathy with the rising spirit of American opposition. By the spring of the

[1] Sanderson, "The Signers," etc. v. 115.

year 1776, it was no longer possible for him to hold back from more direct employment in the Revolution; and he then began his political career by taking his place as a member of the convention for framing the first constitution for New Jersey.[1] His service in that body gave a new éclat to his reputation, and great access to the public confidence in him; and, on the 21st of June, 1776, he received promotion by being transferred from the convention of New Jersey to the Continental Congress, in which body he took his seat in time to give his voice and his vote in favor of the Declaration of Independence.

Thus, at last, was John Witherspoon brought as an active force into the highest sphere of American statesmanship, and at a period of supreme opportunity in our affairs. In that sphere he remained and wrought, with but a single brief interval, until the virtual close of the Revolution. From the beginning, he took and held the foremost rank among his associates. In the mere erudition required for statesmanship, especially at such a crisis, probably few of them were so well equipped as he. This, perhaps, was to have been expected, in view of his previous personal history. They, however, who had supposed that this great academic personage—this renowned divine and philosopher—would in Congress prove himself to be a mere amateur in statesmanship, a doctrinaire and a dreamer, were permitted to enjoy a great surprise. His long training in ecclesiastical politics in Scotland had left to him few things to learn as regards the handling of secular politics in America: he was familiar with the usages of legislative bodies, he had consummate skill in debate, he knew how to influence men to think and act with himself. Throughout all those years in which there were in Congress advocates for an imbecile military policy, for financial shuffling and dishonor, even for the annihilation of all genuine national life, the wit, the wisdom, the moral force of this shrewd Scotsman were to be found on the side of wholesome measures,—an assured union of the

[1] Poore, "The Federal and State Constitutions," ii. 1310–1314.

insurgent States; more power at the centre of government; terms of enlistment long enough to make an army worth having after it had become an army; the management of the public finances on the only principles that have ever proved sound or profitable in the conduct of any business public or private.[1] Moreover, it became soon apparent that, in his view, the chief duty of a congressman was not to talk, but to work. At the sessions of Congress, no member was more constant in attendance; in committees, no one wrought harder, or had harder tasks entrusted to him.[2]

The powerful influence which, through his published writings, Witherspoon exerted upon the course of Revolutionary thought, may be traced in the very few sermons of his which touch upon the political problems of that time, in various congressional papers, and especially in the numerous essays, long or short, serious or mirthful, which he gave to the press between the years 1775 and 1783, and commonly without his name.

His most memorable sermon during this period was that preached by him at Princeton on the 17th of May, 1776, being the general fast appointed by Congress throughout the United Colonies,—an opportunity for solemn delay and for reflection before that great step should be taken which could not be taken back. Witherspoon's discourse bore an imposing title, "The Dominion of Providence over the Passions of Men,"[3] and contained a calm and very striking statement of his reasons for concurring in the American demand for the control by Americans of their own affairs. It was much read on both sides of the Atlantic; and at Glasgow it was sent forth embellished with notes of dis-

[1] For example, see his speeches in Congress "On the Confederation," "Works," ix. 135–141; "On a Motion for Paying the Interest of Loan-Office Certificates," ibid. 117–124; "On the Finances," ibid. 125–134; also his remarkable "Essay on Money," ibid. 9–25.

[2] A fairly good idea of the nature and value of Witherspoon's services as a member of the Congress from 1776 to 1782, may be gathered from Sanderson, "The Signers," etc. v. 116–157.

[3] "Works," v. 176–216.

sent and indignation wherein the reverend author was called a rebel and a traitor.[1] To the American edition of the sermon, Witherspoon added an "Address to the Natives of Scotland residing in America,"[2]—an effective and a much-needed treatment of that series of events, in both countries, which had resulted in so extensive an alienation of American Scotsmen from the cause of American self-government.

As a writer of political and miscellaneous essays, commonly published in the newspapers, it is probable that Witherspoon's activity was far greater than can now be ascertained; but his hand can be traced with certainty in a large group of keen and sprightly productions of that sort,—"Reflections on the Present State of Public Affairs and on the Duty and Interest of America in this Important Crisis,"[3] "Thoughts on American Liberty,"[4] "On the Controversy about Independence,"[5] "On Conducting the American Controversy,"[6] "Aristides,"[7] "On the Contest between Great Britain and America,"[8] "On the Affairs of the United States,"[9] "Observations on the Improvement of America,"[10] and a series of periodical papers called "The Druid."[11] His gift for personal and political satire is shown in "The Humble and Earnest Supplication of J. Rivington, Printer and Bookseller in New York,"[12] and in "Recantation of Benjamin Towne."[13] By far the most masterly secular writing of Witherspoon's is his "Essay on Money as a Medium of Commerce, with Remarks on the Advantages and Disadvantages of Paper admitted into General Circulation,"[14] principally made up of portions of

[1] Sprague, "Annals," etc. iii. 293–294.
[2] "Works," v. 217–236.
[3] Ibid. ix. 66–72.
[4] Ibid. 73–77.
[5] Ibid. 78–82.
[6] Ibid. 83–87.
[7] Ibid. 88–98.
[8] Ibid. 166–170.
[9] Ibid. 171–177.
[10] Ibid. 178, 179.
[11] Ibid. 224–291.
[12] Ibid. 180–191.
[13] Ibid. 192–198; also Albert H. Smyth, "The Philadelphia Magazines," etc. 56, 57.
[14] "Works," ix. 9–65.

speeches delivered by him in Congress, and conveying much invaluable and unfamiliar truth to the American people, then, as so often since then, mired in the bog of financial fallacies and impostures.

V.

Of all these writings of Witherspoon, dealing in grave or playful fashion with Revolutionary themes, the chief note is that of a virile mind, well-balanced, well-trained, and holding itself steadily to its own independent conclusions,—in short, of enlightened and imperturbable common-sense, speaking out in a form always temperate and lucid, often terse and epigrammatic. "There is not a single instance in history," says he, "in which civil liberty was lost, and religious liberty preserved entire. If, therefore, we yield up our temporal property, we at the same time deliver the conscience into bondage."[1] As to the ministers, parliament, and people of Great Britain, "I do not refuse submission to their unjust claims because they are corrupt or profligate, although probably many of them are so, but because they are men, and therefore liable to all the selfish bias inseparable from human nature; . . . because they are separated from us, independent of us, and have an interest in opposing us."[2] "It has been my opinion from the beginning that we did not carry our reasoning fully home when we complained of an arbitrary prince, or of the insolence, cruelty, and obstinacy of Lord North, Lord Bute, or Lord Mansfield. What we have to fear, and what we have to grapple with, is the ignorance, prejudice, partiality, and injustice of human nature."[3] "The question then is: Shall we make resistance with the greatest force,—as rebel subjects of a government which we acknowledge, or as Independent States against an usurped power which we detest and abhor?"[4] "Is there a probable prospect of recon-

[1] "Works," v. 203.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid. ix. 80.
[4] Ibid. 92.

ciliation on constitutional principles? What are these constitutional principles? Will anybody show that Great Britain can be sufficiently sure of our dependence, and yet we sure of our liberties?"[1] "It is proper to observe that the British settlements have been improved in a proportion far beyond the settlements of other European nations. To what can this be ascribed? Not to the climate, for they are of all climates; not to the people, for they are a mixture of all nations. It must, therefore, be resolved singly into the degree of British liberty which they brought from home, and which pervaded more or less their several constitutions."[2] "Can any person of a liberal mind wish that these great and growing countries should be brought back to a state of subjection to a distant power? And can any man deny that, if they had yielded to the claims of the British parliament, they would have been no better than a parcel of tributary states, ruled by lordly tyrants, and exhausted by unfeeling pensioners, under the commission of one too distant to hear the cry of oppression, and surrounded by those who had an interest in deceiving him?"[3] "It ought, therefore, in my opinion, to meet with the cordial approbation of every impartial person, as I am confident it will of posterity, that they have united for common defense, and resolved that they will be both free and independent, because they cannot be the one without the other."[4] As to American Independence, "I mean to shew—1. That it was necessary. 2. That it will be honorable and profitable. And, 3. That in all probability it will be no injury, but a real advantage, to the island of Great Britain."[5]

Of this newly born and newly announced nation, thus starting out in life with a very serious war on its infant hands, the direst need was, not of men to do the fighting, but of money to sustain the men while they were fighting; and in the way of all this stood, not only the organic impotence of

[1] "Works," ix. 97. [2] Ibid. v. 223. [3] Ibid. 224.
[4] Ibid. 224. [5] Ibid.

the general government, but the ignorant, false, and reckless notions as to money and as to the relation of government to money, which these people had brought over with them from their colonial stage, and which, in fact, they had long been putting into practice to their own incalculable loss and shame. Under such circumstances, what greater service to the American cause could have been rendered by a man like Witherspoon, than by exposing, as he did, the financial sophistries of Revolutionary demagogues and blatherskites, and by putting into pithy, lucid, and fearless words the essential and immutable truths as to what is possible and desirable in public finance? "No paper of any kind is, properly speaking, money. It ought never to be made a legal tender. It ought not to be forced upon anybody, because it cannot be forced upon everybody."[1] "The cry of the scarcity of money is generally putting the effect for the cause. No business can be done, say some, because money is scarce. It may be said, with more truth, money is scarce because little business is done. Yet their influence, like that of many other causes and effects, is reciprocal."[2] "Too much money may be emitted upon loan; but to emit money in any other way than upon loan, is to do all evil and no good."[3] "The excessive quantity of paper emitted by the different States of America, will probably be a loss to the whole. They cannot, however, take advantage of one another in that way. That State which emits most will lose most, and vice versa."[4] "Those who refuse doubtful paper, and thereby disgrace it, or prevent its circulation, are not enemies, but friends, to their country."[5]

Happy was it for us, that this clear-headed thinker, this expert in the art of popular exposition, was in full sympathy with those deep human currents of patriotic thought and feeling which then swept towards an Independent national life in this land. Happy was it for us, also, that while he was capable beyond most men of seeing the

[1] "Works" ix. 63. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. 64.
[4] Ibid. [5] Ibid.

historic and cosmopolitan significance of the movement for American Independence, he had the moral greatness to risk even his own great favor with the American people, by telling them that the acquisition of Independence, was not to be the end of their troubles, but rather, in some sense, the beginning of them; since greater perils than those brought in by Red Coats and Hessians were then to meet them, in the form of shallow and anarchical politics, corruption among voters, unscrupulous partisanship, new and hitherto unimagined forms of demagogism, and the boisterous incompetence of men entrusted with power in the regulation and guidance of the state. He who declared that the American Revolution would be "an important era in the history of mankind,"[1] also said: "I am much mistaken if the time is not just at hand when there shall be greater need than ever in America for the most accurate discussion of the principles of society, the rights of nations, and the policy of states"; and that only by making a people "virtuous," can they be made "invincible."[2]

VI.

On the eighth of July, 1778, Ezra Stiles, then fifty years of age, being inducted into the presidency of Yale College, delivered an oration in Latin, "on the encyclopedia of literature,"—meaning thereby the state of human knowledge, on all subjects, up to date; and ever afterward, until very near his death, he was accustomed, in his lectures to the students, after prayers, in the chapel, to launch out from time to time into the vasty deep of the same shoreless theme. To be what he called "a universal scholar," was his ruling passion. There was nothing knowable which he did not very strenuously desire to know. "I consider myself," he wrote in a private memorandum, at the age of twenty, "as a citizen of the intellectual world, and a subject of its almighty Law-giver and Judge. By Him I am

[1] "Works," v. 222. [2] Ibid. ix. 231.

placed upon an honorable theatre of action, to sustain, in the sight of mortal and immortal beings, that character and part which He shall assign me, in order to my being trained up for perfection and immortality ; and shall, therefore, from this time forth, devote my life to the service of God, my country, and mankind."[1] In this spirit, he threw open every window of his mind, toward every quarter of the heavens and the earth: toward the languages of men, their opinions, deeds, laws, institutions, in all ages, in all lands; especially toward the person and character of the Creator as unfolded in His visible universe—in atoms and planets, in space, in time, in force, in the developments of His Providence over all sentient creatures. Thus it was, that as his life lengthened, and as his zeal for learning strengthened, he came to have some valid claim, according to the standards of his time, to be called mathematician, astronomer, chemist, electrician, meteorologist, linguist, orientalist, antiquarian, jurist, theologian, Biblical translator and exegete.

When, accordingly, in 1771, his portrait was painted, he very naturally caused it to be " charged with emblems " descriptive of this omnivorous appetency of his mind. He himself is represented as " in a teaching attitude," with his right hand on his breast, and his left hand holding the Bible. Just behind him, on the left side, is a partial glimpse of his book-shelves, on one of which we see Eusebius, Livy, Du Halde's History of China, the Zohar, the Babylonian Talmud, Aben Ezra, Rabbi Selomo Jarchi, Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon, and Moreh Nevochim; while on another shelf are Newton's Principia, Plato, Watts, Doddridge, Cudworth's Intellectual System, besides five learned New England divines, Hooker, Chauncey, Davenport, Mather, and John Cotton. Upon his right side is a pillar, on the shaft of which is wrought a circle encompassing " a solar point, as an emblem of the Newtonian or Pythagorean system of the sun, planets, and comets." Moreover, at the top of the pillar and on the wall is " an

[1] Holmes, " Life of Stiles," 18.

emblem of the Intellectual World," containing, in a central glory, in Hebrew, the Sacred Name "surrounded with white spots in a field of azure. From each spot ascend three hair-lines, denoting the tendencies of mind to Deity, and communion with the Trinity in the divine light. These spots denote systems of worlds, and their tendencies to the eternal, central, yet omnipresent light. The motto is,—ALL HAPPY IN GOD." [1]

VII.

Now, all that Ezra Stiles did to appease this hunger of his soul in the pursuit of knowledge, and how for this he toiled from youth to age, by day and night, on Sundays and on week-days, in readings, in observations, experiments, conversations, in elaborate and most persistent letters to the learned in many distant lands,—is it not written in the chronicles of Ezra Stiles himself, to wit, in some fifty volumes or more of manuscripts, being his "Itineraries and Memoirs," his "Literary Diary," his memoranda of scientific observations and experiments, his notes for an "Ecclesiastical History of New England," his "Memoirs concerning Mr. Robert Sandeman," his letters, his sermons, his innumerable miscellaneous scraps and jottings, all still reposing under the legal custody of the president of Yale University? [2]

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[1] Holmes, "Life of Stiles," 151–154.

[2] The Stiles Manuscripts may be described as consisting of two portions, those that are bound and those that are unbound. Of the latter, the following are the principal items: (1) Some hundreds of letters to and from Stiles. (2) About forty of his sermons. (3) Loose sheets of material not otherwise classified. Of the former and larger portion of these manuscripts, the following are the principal items: (1) "Literary Diary," from January 1, 1769, to May 6, 1795, 15 vols., quarto. (2) "Itineraries and Memoirs," from May 23, 1760, to November 8, 1794, 6 vols., quarto. (3) Memoranda mainly scientific. About 10 vols. (4) Miscellaneous memoranda. About 10 vols. (5) Material for an "Ecclesiastical History of New England," 1 vol., quarto. (6) Extracts from manuscripts, made by Stiles, 1 vol., quarto. (7) Letters to and from Stiles, 13 vols., quarto and folio. (8) "Memoirs concerning Mr. Robert Sandeman," 1 vol., quarto. (9) The Journal of Rev. John Sergeant of Stockbridge, from April 1, 1739, to March 30, 1740, 1 vol., quarto. This

As to his published writings, any possible list of them would be a very small one, consisting of two or three Latin orations;[1] of a few sermons, such as that "On the Christian Union," in 1761; that "On Saving Knowledge," in 1770; that for the funeral of Napthali Daggett, in 1780; that for "the anniversary election" in Connecticut, in 1783; that for the funeral of Chauncey Whittelsey, in 1787; that for the ordination of Henry Channing, in the same year; and besides these, of a single book only, "A History of Three of the Judges of King Charles I.," in 1794.

A notable contrast, surely, between this man's boundless and tireless intellectual preparation, and any deliberately uttered result! Indeed, he seems to have had no faculty for sustained literary expression. His delight was in the perpetual acquisition of knowledge, never in any record of it, save in his log-book of extemporized notes. On every subject, he was inclined to postpone elaborate report till the data should all be in,—which was to postpone it forever;

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note is founded on my own memoranda made during an inspection of the Stiles Papers, and on information subsequently sent me by Professor Franklin B. Dexter, who also furnished to Henry M. Dexter the description of the Stiles Papers, given in "Congregationalism as Seen in its Literature," App. 288. I infer that many of the manuscript sermons of Stiles are still in existence. One of them, belonging to me, is "No. 454." Stiles's "Literary Diary" ought by all means to be printed without delay, for the light it throws on the intellectual and political life of the eighteenth century.

[1] Besides these, he delivered at least three Latin orations which seem not to have been printed: one in 1752, on the completion of the first half-century from the founding of Yale College; in 1753, on the death of Bishop Berkeley; and, in 1781, on the renewal of public commencements at the college, after an interruption of seven years, caused by the war. On the latter occasion, President Stiles's fondness for exercising in public his gift for languages unknown to the most of his auditors, had an extraordinary gratification: he ushered in the exercises of the morning by an oration in Hebrew, and those of the afternoon by one in Latin. He wrote and spoke Latin with great facility, and as his contemporary, Professor Meigs, thought, "with a purity and elegance that would have honored the age of Augustus." The specimens of his Latin which have come down to us, do not justify this praise: it was far from being immaculate, and one would prefer to extol it as doing honor to the age of George the Third, than to that of Augustus. With Meigs's opinion, in Holmes's "Life of Stiles," 22–23, compare that of a real Latinist, Kingsley, in his "Life of Stiles," 73.

and if, by chance, for such a report he ever made a beginning, he was apt soon to fall away from it, before the enticements of fresh opportunities for knowledge. Besides, he was deficient in the sense of form, proportion, congruity, in literary judgment, poise, and self-restraint; and with respect to his erudition, he was nearly always its victim rather than its master. Of these traits, the monumental example is his solitary book, published in old age,—a medley born of the vagrant and gossiping industry of more than thirty years,—a heterogeneous collection of facts, fictions, rumors, traditions, guesses, appertaining more or less to the three regicides, Whalley, Goffe, and Dixwell, who had found in New England kindly shelter and quiet graves: a book not without value, not without interest, not without a sort of fascination, yet admitting so many puerile incidents, and so many pottering discussions, as to have led John Adams, soon after its publication, to describe it as "a wild thing," and a sign of its author's mental decay.[1]

It may be said of Stiles, moreover, that he often wrote well, except when he tried to do so. In some moods of literary unconsciousness, his thought was clear, and his language simple, incisive, impressive; but upon any occasion of unusual importance, the balance of his discretion was liable to very serious disturbance. At such times, deeming it his duty to produce before the world his learning, he commonly appalled it by his excesses of pedantry; while some fatal supposition, on his part, that he was then expected to be eloquent, had the effect of precipitating him into rhetorical hysterics—into the very orgasm of bombast. "O Washington!" exclaimed he, in his election sermon, in 1783, delivered in the presence of the governor and general assembly of Connecticut, "O Washington! how do I love thy name! How have I often adored and blessed thy God, for creating and forming thee the great ornament of human kind! . . . The world and posterity will, with admiration, contemplate thy deliberate, cool, and stable judgment,

[1] "Correspondence of Miss Adams," vol. ii., part ii. 144–145.

thy virtues, thy valor and heroic achievements, as far surpassing those of Cyrus, whom the world loved and adored. The sound of thy fame shall go out into all the earth, and extend to distant ages. . . . Such has been thy military wisdom in the struggles of this arduous conflict, such the noble rectitude, amiableness, and mansuetude of thy character, something is there so singularly glorious and venerable thrown by Heaven about thee, that not only does thy country love thee, but our very enemies stop the madness of their fire in full volley, stop the illiberality of their slander at thy name, as if rebuked from Heaven with a—'Touch not mine Anointed, and do my Hero no harm!' Thy fame is of sweeter perfume than Arabian spices in the gardens of Persia. A Baron de Steuben shall waft its fragrance to the monarch of Prussia: a Marquis de Lafayette shall waft it to a far greater monarch, and diffuse thy renown throughout Europe. Listening angels shall catch the odor, waft it to heaven, and perfume the universe!"[1]

VIII.

Nevertheless, the man who, in the seclusion of his study, deliberately forged this apostrophe, and then with vociferous self-satisfaction, hurled it at the heads of the unhappy governor and legislators of Connecticut, was by no means a fool; nay, but one of the wisest, acutest, and noblest men of that period, who did great things in his day for the enlightenment of men and the advancement of civilization,—for science, for the arts and industries, for literature, for education, for the reign of justice, freedom, and good-will in this world.

The real quality of his intellect we may partly gather from his life-long attitude toward that enormous movement of skepticism which swept through the entire period in which he lived. Having himself, as regards the Christian doctrine, "gone through all the conflicts that it is possible

[1] "The United States elevated to Glory and Honor," 42–43.

for the human mind to be perplexed with,"[1] he had achieved a clear vision of its truth, wherein, as he said, "revelation" appeared to him as proceeding "from the most perfect and consummate reason,"[2] and to invite and welcome, rather than to repel, any form of rational criticism. When, accordingly, in 1759, President Clap of Yale College declined to receive for its library a gift of books, "some of which were deistical," Ezra Stiles, then a pastor at Newport, took this ground in opposition: "Deism has gained such head, in this age of licentious liberty, that it would be in vain to try to suppress it by hiding the deistical writings: the only way is, to come forth into the open field, and dispute the matter on even footing. The evidences of revelation are, in my opinion, nearly as demonstrative as Newton's Principia, and these are the weapons to be used."[3] Having perfect faith in the victory of truth in every open and fair fight, he could not consent that the large political liberty which America was then winning for itself, should ever be lessened by any pettiness of theological restraint. It is in America, as he said, just at the close of the Revolutionary War, that "the unfettered mind can think with a noble enlargement; and with an unbounded freedom, go wherever the light of truth directs. Here will be no bloody tribunals, no cardinals inquisitors-general, to bend the human mind, forcibly to control the understanding, and put out the light of reason, the candle of the Lord, in man. . . . Religion may here receive its last, most liberal and impartial examination. . . . Here deism will have its full chance; nor need libertines more to complain of being overcome by any weapons but the gentle, the powerful, ones of argument and truth. Revelation will be found to stand the test of the ten-thousandth examination."[4]

As he thus welcomed for Christianity the fullest criticism on the part of its opponents, so he would have among

[1] Stiles, MS., quoted in Holmes's "Life of Stiles," 85.
[2] Stiles, letter to Wright, in Holmes's "Life of Stiles," 123.
[3] Letter to Clap, in Holmes's "Life of Stiles," 79.
[4] Election Sermon, in 1783, p. 56.

all religious sects mutual forbearance: and his charity was a mantle as wide as the brotherhood of man. "It has been a principle with me for thirty-five years past," so he wrote in 1781, "to walk and live in a decent, civil, and respectful communication with all, although in some of our sentiments in philosophy, religion, and politics, of diametrically opposite opinions. Hence, I can freely live and converse in civil friendship, with Jews, Romanists, and all the sects of Protestants, and even with Deists. I am, all along, blamed by bigots for this liberality, though, I think, none impeach me now of hypocrisy; because I most freely, fully, and plainly give my sentiments on everything in science, religion, and politics. I have my own judgment, and do not conceal it. I have no secrets. I hold it beneath the dignity of a philosopher, to suppress his sentiments upon anything. It is, indeed, unworthy of him to make up hasty opinions on every new subject which occurs. Upon these, therefore, he should discourse, in the way of search and enquiry, till he has formed his judgment: then let him express it, but without reprobating others, or treating them with acrimonious reflections, because they think differently."[1] Nobly did Channing describe Ezra Stiles as one whose "heart was of no sect," and who "desired to heal the wounds of the divided church of Christ, not by a common creed, but by the spirit of love."[2]

This same large and fearless spirit abode with him, likewise, in his judgments concerning purely secular affairs—such as forms of government, and the duties and rights of the people. He was an early specimen of the American radical. On taking his bachelor's degree, just thirty years before the Declaration of Independence, he defended this thesis: "Jus regum non est jure divino hæreditarium"[3]; and in the year which saw the close of our long struggle with the king of England, he shewed that with respect to kings

[1] "Literary Diary," in Holmes's "Life of Stiles," 274–275.

[2] "The Works of William Ellery Channing," iv. 340–341, where occurs an exquisite eulogy of Stiles, whom Channing personally knew.

[3] Holmes, "Life of Stiles," 14.

in general, his opinion had in the meantime suffered no conservative relapse: "It is next to an impossibility to tame a monarch, and few have ruled without ferocity."[1] It is doubtful if any statesman of that age saw earlier or more clearly than did this New England divine, the inevitable direction and the irresistible force of that prodigious undercurrent in American society which was setting toward union, Independence, and national greatness. In 1760, in a discourse occasioned by the English capture of Montreal, and their reduction of all Canada, he saw for England a gain in which was coiled up a far greater loss: "It is probable that in time there will be formed a Provincial Confederacy and a Common Council, standing on free provincial suffrage; and this may in time terminate in an imperial diet, when the imperial dominion will subsist, as it ought, in election."[2] In 1761, in a sermon on the accession of George the Third, he spoke of "the possible exigencies of New England, which may fall within the period of his majesty's reign"; adding that if the "men, who have a mighty opinion of retrenching the liberties of these colonies, or throwing a net of policy over them, . . . should gain access to his majesty's ears, mistaken representations may induce his majesty to accede to measures of unhappy consequences to the liberty of America."[3] In 1774, he wrote to the English historian, Catharine Macaulay: "There will be a Runnymede in America."[4]

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[1] Election Sermon for 1783, p. 17.

[2] Thanksgiving Sermon, in Holmes's "Life of Stiles," 99–100.

[3] Quoted in Holmes's "Life of Stiles," 101–102.

[4] Holmes, "Life of Stiles," 180. Other instances of Stiles's political sagacity and foresight are to be met with in Holmes's book; while his unpublished "Literary Diary" abounds in them. See, also, Gordon, "History of the American Revolution," i. 115; and William E. Foster, "Stephen Hopkins," ii. foot notes on pp. 86, 87, 95, 118–119, together with a letter from Stiles in Appendix T. A good short sketch of Stiles is given by Sprague, "Annals," i. 470–479, particularly valuable for reminiscences of this Yale president by two of his pupils. A sprightly account of him, under the title of "An Old New England Divine," written by his great-granddaughter, Kate Gannett Wells, with the advantage of family papers, is in "The Atlantic Monthly," for Aug., 1884, pp. 247–257.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

TWO APOSTLES OF QUIETNESS AND GOOD WILL: JOHN WOOLMAN AND ST. JOHN CREVECŒUR.

I.—Comparison between Franklin's "Autobiography" and John Woolman's "Journal"—The spirit of Woolman's life—He is weaned from the desire for outward greatness—Begins his first journey to visit Friends.

II.—John Woolman's apostleship—The kindly burden thereof as set forth in his "Journal."

III.—John Woolman's death in 1772—His several ethical and religious essays—An unlettered writer whose purity of style is born of the purity of his heart—The love and praise of him by Charles Lamb, Channing, Crabb Robinson, and Whittier.

IV.—St. John Crevecœur's "Letters from an American Farmer" published in 1782—Their sweetness of tone and literary grace—Personal history of the author—His personal and literary traits as American farmer, philosopher, dreamer, and altruist.

V.—Crevecœur's description of the American colonies—The limited range of his topics—His definition of an American—His sympathetic studies of nature—His classic contributions to the literature of natural history.

VI.—The note of peace in Crevecœur's book—He celebrates the comfort of American rural life, its opportunity, thoughtfulness, equality, dignity, friendliness, its happy companionship with all innocent things.

VII.—The note of pain in Crevecœur's book—The inevitable barbarism of negro slavery—His pathetic picture of the caged negro—The Indian wrong and terror—This quietist appalled by the wrangles and violence of the Revolution—His idealized descriptions of American felicity both fascinated and misled many readers in Europe—His influence upon the English poets, especially the inventors of "Pantisocracy."

I.

It is no slight distinction attaching to American literature for the period of the Revolution, that in a time so often characterized as barren of important literary achievement, were produced two of the most perfect examples of auto-

biography to be met with in any literature. One of these, of course, is Franklin's "Autobiography," the first, the largest, and the best part of which was written in 1771,—a work that has long since taken its place among the most celebrated and most widely read of modern books. Almost at the very time at which that fascinating story was begun, the other great example of autobiography in our Revolutionary literature was finished—"The Journal of John Woolman," a book which William Ellery Channing long afterward described as "beyond comparison the sweetest and purest autobiography in the language."[1] It is a notable fact, however, that while these two masterpieces in the same form of literature are products of the same period, they are, in respect of personal quality, very nearly antipodal to each other; for, as Franklin's account of himself delineates a career of shrewd and somewhat selfish geniality, of unperturbed carnal content, of kindly systematic and most successful worldliness, so the autobiography of Woolman sets forth a career which turns out to be one of utter unworldliness, of entire self-effacement, all in obedience to an Unseen Leadership, and in meek and most tender devotion to the happiness of others—especially slaves, poor toiling white people, and speechless creatures unable to defend themselves against the inhumanity of man.

John Woolman, who was of a spirit so unpresuming that he would have wondered and have been troubled to be told that any writing of his was ever to be dealt with as literature, was born in 1720 in Northampton, New Jersey, his father being a farmer, and of the Society of Friends. Until his twenty-first year, he lived at home with his parents, and, as he expresses it, "wrought on the plantation." Having reached his majority, he took employment in the neighboring village of Mount Holly, in a shop for general merchandise. In this occupation he passed several years; after which, as he writes, "I was thoughtful of

[1] This was said by Channing not long before his death, in a conversation with Whittier. Introd. to "The Journal of John Woolman," 2.

some other way of business; perceiving merchandize to be attended with much cumber in the way of trading in these parts. My mind, through the power of truth, was in a good degree weaned from the desire of outward greatness, and I was learning to be content with real conveniences that were not costly; so that a way of life free from much entanglements, appeared best for me, though the income might be small. . . . I saw that an humble man, with the blessing of the Lord, might live on a little; and that where the heart was set on greatness, success in business did not satisfy the craving, but that commonly, with an increase of wealth, the desire of wealth increased. There was a care on my mind so to pass my time, that nothing might hinder me from the most steady attention to the voice of the true Shepherd. My employer, though now a retailer of goods, was by trade a tailor, and kept a servant man at that business; and I began to think about learning the trade, expecting that if I should settle, I might by this trade and a little retailing of goods, get a living in a plain way without the load of great business. I mentioned it to my employer, and we soon agreed on terms; and then, when I had leisure from the affairs of merchandize, I worked with his man. I believed the hand of Providence pointed out this business for me, and was taught to be content with it, though I felt at times a disposition that would have sought for something greater. But, through the revelation of Jesus Christ, I had seen the happiness of humility, and there was an earnest desire in me to enter deep into it; and at times this desire arose to a degree of fervent supplication, wherein my soul was so environed with heavenly light and consolation, that things were made easy to me which had been otherwise. . . . I then wrought at my trade as a tailor; carefully attended meetings for worship and discipline; and found an enlargement of gospel love in my mind, and therein a concern to visit Friends in some of the back settlements of Pennsylvania and Virginia; and being thoughtful about a companion, I expressed it to my beloved friend, Isaac An-

drews, who then told me that he had drawings to the same places, and also to go through Maryland, Virginia, and Carolina. . . . I opened the case in our monthly-meeting; and Friends expressing their unity therewith, we obtained certificates to travel as companions,—his from Haddonfield, and mine from Burlington." [1]

II.

The story of John Woolman, as thus far told, brings us to the point where he began to give himself almost wholly to the true work of his life—that of an apostle, with a need to go from land to land in fulfillment of his apostleship, and able, like one of the greatest of all apostles, to minister to his own necessities by the labors of a lowly trade. For, long before he set out upon these travels, even from his early childhood, he had entered, as he thought, into the possession of certain treasures of the spirit which he could not hoard up for himself alone,—which, if he could but share them with others, would make others rich and happy beyond desire or even imagination. As we study John Woolman along the pages upon which he has made record of his inmost nature, we shall be inclined to infer that the traits which made him the man he was, were these: first, a singularly vivid perception of the reality and worth of things spiritual; secondly, such a passion of desire for all that is like God, that whatsoever he met with in himself or in others which was otherwise, grieved him with an ineffable sorrow; thirdly, love, taking every form of adoration for the Highest Love, and of sympathy and effort on behalf of all God's creatures, great and small; next, humility; next, directness, simplicity, sincerity; next, refinement. Certainly, the power of this book cannot be conveyed by detached passages, and in all cases must be without effect, save upon natures that are prepared for it; yet of what has just now been said, some verification may be had in sentences

[1] "A Journal of the Life," etc., 19–21.

like these, taken here and there from it. "I was taught to read near as soon as I was capable of it; and as I went from school one seventh day, I remember, while my companions went to play by the way, I went forward out of sight, and sitting down I read the twenty-second chapter of the Revelation: 'He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, &c.' And in reading it, my mind was drawn to seek after that pure habitation."[1] "I . . . was early convinced in my mind, that true religion consisted in an inward life, wherein the heart doth love and reverence God the Creator, and learns to exercise true justice and goodness, not only toward all men, but also toward the brute creatures; that as the mind was moved, by an inward principle, to love God as an invisible incomprehensible Being, by the same principle it was moved to love Him in all His manifestations in the visible world; that, as by His breath the flame of life was kindled in all animal sensible creatures, to say we love God as unseen, and at the same time exercise cruelty toward the least creature moving by His life, or by life derived from Him, was a contradiction in itself."[2] "I looked upon the works of God in this visible creation, and an awfulness covered me; my heart was tender and often contrite, and universal love to my fellow creatures increased in me."[3] "Some glances of real beauty may be seen in their faces, who dwell in true meekness."[4] "When I eat, drank, and lodged free-cost with people who lived in ease on the hard labor of slaves, I felt uneasy; and as my mind was inward to the Lord, I found from place to place this uneasiness return upon me at times through the whole visit."[5] "This trade of importing slaves from their native country . . . was frequently the subject of my serious thoughts. And I saw in these southern provinces so many vices and corruptions, increased by this trade and this way of life, that it appeared to me as a dark gloominess hanging over the

[1] "A Journal of the Life," etc., 2. [2] Ibid. 8–9.
[3] Ibid. 9. [4] Ibid. 9. [5] Ibid. 23.

land. And though now many willingly run into it, yet in future the consequence will be grievous to posterity: I express it as it hath appeared to me, not once nor twice, but as a matter fixed on my mind."[1] "I was then carried in spirit to the mines, where poor oppressed people were digging rich treasures for those called Christians; and heard them blaspheme the name of Christ, at which I was grieved —for His name to me was precious."[2] "About this time, a person at some distance lying sick, his brother came to me to write his will. I knew he had slaves, and asking his brother, was told he intended to leave them as slaves to his children. As writing is a profitable employ, and as offending sober people was disagreeable to my inclination, I was straitened in my mind; but as I looked to the Lord, He inclined my heart to His testimony. And I told the man, that I believed the practice of continuing slavery to this people was not right, and had a scruple in my mind against doing writings of that kind; that though many in our society kept them as slaves, still I was not easy to be concerned in it, and desired to be excused from going to write the will. I spake to him in the fear of the Lord, and he made no reply to what I said, but went away. He also had some concerns in the practice, and I thought he was displeased with me. In this case, I had a fresh confirmation, that acting contrary to present outward interest, from a motive of divine love and inward regard to truth and righteousness, and thereby incurring the resentments of people, opens the way to a treasure better than silver, and to a friendship exceeding the friendship of men."[3] "A neighbor received a bad bruise in his body, and sent for me to bleed him; which being done, he desired me to write his will. I took notes; and amongst other things, he told me to which of his children he gave his young negro. I considered the pain and distress he was in, and knew not how it would end; so I wrote his will, save only that part concerning his slave, and carrying it to his bed-side, read it to him, and then told

[1] "A Journal of the Life," etc., 24. [2] Ibid. 233. [3] Ibid. 35.

him, in a friendly way, that I could not write any instruments by which my fellow creatures were made slaves, without bringing trouble on my own mind. I let him know that I charged nothing for what I had done, and desired to be excused from doing the other part in the way he proposed. We then had a serious conference on the subject. At length, he agreeing to set her free, I finished his will."[1] "We were taught by renewed experience to labor for an inward stillness; at no time to seek for words, but live in the spirit of truth, and utter that to the people which truth opened in us."[2] "The natural man loveth eloquence, and many love to hear eloquent orations; and if there is not a careful attention to the gift, men who have once labored in the pure Gospel ministry, growing weary of suffering and ashamed of appearing weak, may kindle a fire, compass themselves about with sparks, and walk in the light—not of Christ who is under suffering, but of that fire which they, going from the gift, have kindled; and that, in hearers, which is gone from the meek suffering state into the worldly wisdom, may be warmed with this fire, and speak highly of these labors. That which is of God gathers to God, and that which is of the world, is owned by the world."[3]

III.

Thus, the autobiography of John Woolman was the gradual and secret growth of many years, beginning when he was of the age of thirty-six, and added to from time to time until, at the age of fifty-two, being in the city of York, in England, about the business of his Master, he was stricken down of the small pox, whereof he died. Besides this story of his life, he left several ethical and religious essays:—"Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes"[4]; "Considerations on Pure Wisdom, and Human Policy, on Labor, on Schools, and on the Right Use of the

[1] "A Journal of the Life," etc., 42–43. [2] Ibid. 30. [3] Ibid. 243–244.
[4] Part I. first printed in 1754; Part II. in 1762.

Lord's Outward Gifts"[1]; "Considerations on the True Harmony of Mankind, and How it is to be Maintained"[2]; finally, "A Word of Remembrance and Caution to the Rich,"[3]—the last being in some respects the most impressive of all his essays, with a striking applicability to problems now vexing the civilized world.

While these essays set forth, without reserve and without censoriousness, the very altruism of Jesus Christ, which, as Woolman thought, must first live in the hearts of men, both rich and poor, before the distinctions of outward condition will cease to occasion bitterness and violence upon earth, it is fitting here to add, that, like the autobiography, all these writings are, as Whittier has said, in the style "of a man unlettered, but with natural refinement and delicate sense of fitness, the purity of whose heart enters into his language."[4] "The secret of Woolman's purity of style," said Channing, "is that his eye was single, and that conscience dictated the words."[5] There is about John Woolman's writings that unconventionality of thought, that charity without pretense, that saintliness without sanctimony or sourness, that delicacy, that untaught beauty of phrase, by which we are helped to understand the ardor of Charles Lamb's love for him, as uttered in his impulsive exhortation to the readers of the Essays of Elia: "Get the writings of John Woolman by heart."[6] "A perfect gem!" wrote Henry Crabb Robinson, in 1824, of Woolman's "Journal," which Lamb had shortly before made known to him. "His is a 'schöne Seele.' An illiterate tailor, he writes in a style of the most exquisite purity and grace. His moral qualities are transferred to his writings."[7] Perhaps, after all, the

[1] First printed in 1768.

[2] First printed in 1770.

[3] First printed in 1793, and reprinted as a part of the Appendix to Whittier's edition of "The Journal of John Woolman."

[4] "The Journal of John Woolman," Introd., 33.

[5] Cited by Whittier, Ibid. 34.

[6] This occurs in the ninth of the Essays of Elia, entitled "A Quakers' Meeting." "The Works of Charles Lamb," iii. 84.

[7] "Diary . . . of Henry Crabb Robinson," i. 403.

aroma that lingers about Woolman's words is best described by Woolman's true spiritual successor in American literature, in the saying, that he who reads these writings becomes sensible "of a sweetness as of violets." [1]

IV.

In 1782, just as the people of England were beginning to adjust themselves to the fact that their obstreperous American children had finally come of age, and were giving rather too many proofs of their capacity to set up political housekeeping on their own account, there was published in London an American book about these same American children and their big country, but written with a sweetness of tone and, likewise, with a literary grace and a power of fascination, then quite unexpected from the western side of the Atlantic. It presented itself to the public behind this ample title-page:—"Letters from an American Farmer, describing certain provincial situations, manners, and customs, not generally known, and conveying some idea of the late and present interior circumstances of the British Colonies in North America: written for the information of a friend in England, by J. Hector St. John, a farmer in Pennsylvania." [2]

The name of the author as thus given upon his title-page, was not his name in full, but only the baptismal portion of it. By omitting from the book his surname, which was Crevecœur, he had chosen to disguise to the English public the fact—which could hardly have added to his welcome among them—that though he was an American, he was not an English American, but a French one,—having been born in Normandy, and of a noble family there, in 1731. Moreover, this is not his only device for self-concealment; for, throughout the book, he writes under the character of a simple-hearted American farmer who, born in America, and with but slight education, and with no opportunity for

[1] Whittier, Introd. to "The Journal of John Woolman," 34.

[2] The copy used by me is the edition of 1783, "Printed for Thomas Davies, in Russell Street, Covent Garden."

travel beyond the bounds of his native land, has inherited his farm from his American father, and has learned, almost within the horizon of that farm, his best lessons concerning this world and other worlds and the meaning of life everywhere.

In reality, however, while really an American farmer, Crevecœur was a man of education, of refinement, of varied experience in the world. When but a lad of sixteen, he had removed from France to England; when but twenty-three, he had emigrated to America. Here, in due time, he had taken unto himself an American farm, and an American wife, and with true French graciousness and tact had quickly assimilated the ways of life, especially of rural life, in his adopted country. It is probable that he was of the Society of Friends—which may partly account for his coming to America and especially to Pennsylvania, as well as for many peculiarities of his book,—some of its local and personal allusions, its gentle tone, its spirituality, its mysticism, its tender but firm championship of the poor Indian and the poor slave, and, above all, its prevailing reticence concerning the ferocious political and military controversies of the Revolution. At any rate, being a man of quite uncommon literary cultivation, and having the vivacity and the imaginative flexibility of his race, having also a fondness both for human fellowship and for solitude, and the power to look upon life, even in a wilderness, through the eyes of a scholar, a philosopher, and an idealist, he threw himself with full delight into the primitive free spirit of the new world,—its consciousness of ample room and of escape from tradition, its helpfulness, its frank customs, crude labors, artless pleasures,—and all these he was able, at last, to interpret to the old world in a series of idyllic descriptions which, surely, could not be fallacious or misleading—except, of course, to people who were not scholars, philosophers, and idealists, or who, at least, had not his faculty of seeing in this world those beautiful realities that are invisible always to the mere bodily sight.

V.

As an account of the American colonies, this book makes no pretension either to system or to completeness; and yet it does attain to a sort of breadth of treatment by seizing upon certain representative traits of the three great groups of colonies. For the northern group, he has five letters, devoted to Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, and Cape Cod. For the middle group, he has two letters, evidently founded upon his own experience as the possessor of a farm in Pennsylvania, on "the edge of the great wilderness, three hundred miles from the sea": one of these letters being descriptive of "the situation, feelings, and pleasures of an American farmer," and the other of the "distresses of a frontier-man." For the southern group, he has but one letter, dealing with Charleston, South Carolina, and with the more harrowing and tragic form of the slave-labor system as prevalent in that region. The remaining letters—four in number—are taken up with a variety of topics, all having their interpretative value; such as the genius and the achievements of John Bartram the American botanist, his own observations upon natural history in America, and especially some aspects of the race-problem there, which he deals with in answer to the question—"What is an American?"

If we would come at once into contact with Crevecœur's habit and tone of thought,—a delicate and joyous perception of phenomena, and a divination of their meaning as seen by him through a haze of noble idealizing sentiment,—we can perhaps do no better than to turn to his discussion of this very question—a question still often asked and perhaps never yet fully answered. Premising that the people of the colonies "are a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes," and that "from this promiscuous breed that race now called Americans have arisen," he repeats the enquiry—"What, then, is the American, this new man? He is neither an European, nor the descendant of an European: hence that strange mixture of blood, which

you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family, whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. He becomes an American by being received in the broad lap of our great 'alma mater.' Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world. Americans are the western pilgrims, who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigor, and industry, which began long since in the east. They will finish the great circle. The Americans were once scattered all over Europe. Here they are incorporated into one of the finest systems of population which has ever appeared, and which will hereafter become distinct by the power of the different climates they inhabit. The American ought therefore to love this country much better than that wherein either he or his forefathers were born. Here the rewards of his industry follow, with equal steps, the progress of his labor. His labor is founded on the basis of nature—self-interest: can it want a stronger allurement? Wives and children, who before in vain demanded of him a morsel of bread, now, fat and frolicsome, gladly help their father to clear those fields whence exuberant crops are to arise, to feed and to clothe them all, without any part being claimed either by a despotic prince, a rich abbot, or a mighty lord. Here religion demands but little of him,—a small voluntary salary to the minister, and gratitude to God: can he refuse these? The American is a new man, who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas, and form new opinions. From involuntary idleness, servile dependence, penury, and useless labor, he has passed to toils of a very different nature, rewarded by ample subsistence.—This is an American."[1]

[1] "Letters," etc., 48; 51–53.

It is probable that not many passages in these letters were more enjoyed at the time, or are more likely to last in our literature as delightful examples of description at first hand, than those in which the author gives the results of his keen and sympathetic watchfulness of nature in the New World, —such as his account of the intrusive swallow and the submissive wren,[1] or of the bee-hunt,[2] or of the battle between the water-snake and the black-snake,[3]—all of which, indeed, are contributions to natural history as well as to literature.

VI.

There are in this book two distinct notes—one of great peace, another of great pain. The earlier and larger portion of the book gives forth this note of peace: it is a prose pastoral of life in the New World, as that life must have revealed itself to a well-appointed American farmer of poetic and optimistic temper, in the final stage of our colonial era, and just before the influx of the riot and bitterness of the great disruption.[4] What he thus writes breathes such deep tranquillity as might have its pulse in some leafy dale of Arcadia. Evidently this American farmer has found some happy valley—some peace-encircled spot—where, in modest competence, and with a "holiday-rejoicing spirit," he can plough his fields, and angle in his brooks, and take note of the splendors of sun-rise, and become acquainted with his birds and bees and squirrels and other furtive creatures—including even his own wife and children. Those political busy-bodies who, in the enjoyment of the utmost freedom, have yet thrown themselves into the anguish of imaginary slavery through their gratuitous speculations over the taxing-power of parliament, have no message for him. At

[1] "Letters," etc., 40–41.

[2] Ibid. 34–36.

[3] Ibid. 243–246.

[4] He himself says that several of the letters in his book were written before "the troubles that lately convulsed the American colonies" had "broke out." "Letters," etc., 7 n.

present he hears them not. He celebrates the comfort of American life — its opportunity — its thoughtfulness — its dignity — its beneficence. From his far-away plantation he stretches out his hands and shares in the "secret communion among good men throughout the world."[1] Happy with enough, he has no hatred for those who have more. "I envy no man's prosperity, and wish no other portion of happiness than that I may live to teach the same philosophy to my children."[2] He exults in the largeness, equality, facility, of life in this land: "Here we have in some measure, regained the ancient dignity of our species: our laws are simple and just; we are a race of cultivators; our cultivation is unrestrained, and therefore everything is prosperous and flourishing. For my part, I had rather admire the ample barn of one of our opulent farmers, who himself felled the first tree in his plantation, and was first founder of his settlement, than study the dimensions of the temple of Ceres. I had rather record the progressive steps of this industrious farmer, throughout all the stages of his labors and other operations, than examine how modern Italian convents can be supported without doing anything but singing and praying."[3] He is glad to think that American society "is not composed, as in Europe, of great lords who possess everything, and of a herd of people who have nothing. Here are no aristocratical families, no courts, no kings, no bishops, no ecclesiastical dominion, no invisible power giving to a few a very visible one."[4] "We are a people of cultivators, scattered over an immense territory, communicating with each other by means of good roads and navigable rivers, united by the silken bands of mild government, all respecting the laws, without dreading their power, because they are equitable."[5] He loves to think of America "as the asylum of freedom, as the cradle of future nations, and the refuge of distressed Europeans."[6] "We know, properly speaking, no strangers: this is every person's country."[7] He is fond of giving us

[1] "Letters," etc., Dedication. [2] Ibid. 45. [3] Ibid. 8–9.
[4] Ibid. 46. [5] Ibid, 47. [6] Ibid. Dedication. [7] Ibid. 70.

glimpses of his own serene and manly relation to life, as he sits "smoking a contemplative pipe"[1] on his piazza, or as he plows his low ground holding his "little boy on a chair which screws to the beam of the plow."[2] No struggle for existence, no carking care, keeps him from enjoying the sights and sounds of nature about him: "The pleasure I receive from the warblings of the birds in the spring is superior to my poor description, as the continual succession of their tuneful notes is for ever new to me. I generally rise from bed about that indistinct interval which, properly speaking, is neither night nor day; for this is the moment of the most universal vocal choir. Who can listen unmoved to the sweet love-tales of our robins, told from tree to tree, or to the shrill cat-birds? The sublime accents of the thrush, from on high, always retard my steps, that I may listen to the delicious music. The variegated appearances of the dew-drops, as they hang to the different objects, must present, even to a clownish imagination, the most voluptuous ideas. The astonishing art which all birds display in the construction of their nests, ill-provided as we may suppose them with proper tools, their neatness, their convenience, always make me ashamed of the slovenliness of our houses. Their love to their dame, their incessant careful attention, and the peculiar songs they address to her while she tediously incubates their eggs, remind me of my duty, could I ever forget it. Their affection to their helpless little ones is a lovely precept; and, in short, the whole economy of what we proudly call the brute creation, is admirable in every circumstance; and vain man, though adorned with the additional gift of reason, might learn from the perfection of instinct, how to regulate the follies, and how to temper the errors, which this second gift often makes him commit. This is a subject on which I have often bestowed the most serious thoughts. I have often blushed within myself, and been greatly astonished, when I have compared the unerring path they all follow,—all just, all proper, all wise, up to the nec-

[1] "Letters," etc., 40.

[2] Ibid. 26–27.

essary degree of perfection—with the coarse, the imperfect, systems of men."[1]

VII.

This note of peace holds undisturbed through the first half of the book, and more. Not until, in the latter half of it, the author comes to describe slavery in the far-south,[2] likewise the harsh relations between the colonists and the Indians,[3] finally the outbreak of the tempest of civil war, does his book give out its second note—the note of pain. His observations upon slavery are penetrating, and while never censorious, are yet pitiless in their justice and their moral purity. Moreover, the barbarism—perhaps, the necessary barbarism—of its penal methods, is set forth by him in a single picture, that of the caged negro; a picture, which has genuine literary power—quietness of stroke, absolute sureness, vividness, and pathos, and a self-enforcing logic which no dialectics can refute or escape. "I was not long since invited to dine with a planter who lived three miles from ——, . . . In order to avoid the heat of the sun, I resolved to go on foot, sheltered in a small path leading through a pleasant wood. I was leisurely travelling along, attentively examining some peculiar plants which I had collected, when all at once I felt the air strongly agitated, though the day was perfectly calm and sultry. I immediately cast my eyes toward the cleared ground, from which I was but a small distance, in order to see whether it was not occasioned by a sudden shower; when at that instant a sound, resembling a deep rough voice, uttered, as I thought, a few inarticulate monosyllables. Alarmed and surprised, I precipitately looked all around, when I perceived, at about six rods distance, something resembling a cage, suspended to the limbs of a tree, all the branches of which appeared covered with large birds of prey, fluttering about and anx-

[1] "Letters," etc., 38–39.

[2] See, for example, pages 219–224.

[3] As in pages 272–275.

iously endeavoring to perch on the cage. Actuated by an involuntary motion of my hands, more than by any design of my mind, I fired at them: they all flew to a short distance, with a most hideous noise, when, horrid to think and painful to repeat, I perceived a negro suspended in the cage, and left there to expire! I shudder when I recollect that the birds had already picked out his eyes; his cheek bones were bare; his arms had been attacked in several places; and his body seemed covered with a multitude of wounds. From the edges of the hollow sockets, and from the lacerations with which he was disfigured, the blood slowly dropped and tinged the ground beneath. No sooner were the birds flown, than swarms of insects covered the whole body of this unfortunate wretch, eager to feed on his mangled flesh and to drink his blood. I found myself suddenly arrested by the power of affright and terror; my nerves were convulsed; I trembled, I stood motionless, involuntarily contemplating the fate of this negro in all its dismal latitude. The living spectre, though deprived of his eyes, could still distinctly hear, and in his uncouth dialect begged me to give him some water to allay his thirst. Humanity herself would have recoiled back with horror; she would have balanced whether to lessen such reliefless distress, or mercifully with one blow to end this dreadful scene of agonizing torture. Had I had a ball in my gun, I certainly should have despatched him; but, finding myself unable to perform so kind an office, I sought, though trembling, to relieve him as well as I could. A shell ready fixed to a pole, which had been used by some negroes, presented itself to me; I filled it with water, and with trembling hands I guided it to the quivering lips of the wretched sufferer. Urged by the irresistible power of thirst, he endeavored to meet it, as he instinctively guessed its approach by the noise it made in passing through the bars of the cage. 'Tankè you, whitè man; tankè you; putè somè poison and givè me.' 'How long have you been hanging there?'—I asked him. 'Two days, and me no die; the birds, the birds, aaah me!' Oppressed with the reflec-

tions which this shocking spectacle afforded me, I mustered strength enough to walk away, and soon reached the house where I intended to dine. There I heard that the reason for this slave's being thus punished, was on account of his having killed the overseer of the plantation. They told me that the laws of self-preservation rendered such executions necessary, and supported the doctrine with the arguments generally made use of to justify the practice, with the repetition of which I will not trouble you at present." [1]

In the final chapter of the book, entitled "Distresses of a Frontier Man," the note of pain, which has begun to be heard still earlier, rises into something like a wail; for, the twofold horrors, first of impending attacks by Indians, and, secondly, of civil war between white men, have at last reached the once happy home of this bucolic philosopher and quietist. "The hour is come at last, that I must fly from my house and abandon my farm. But what course shall I steer, enclosed as I am? . . . Whichever way I look, nothing but the most frightful precipices present themselves to my view, in which hundreds of my friends and acquaintances have already perished. Of all animals that live on the surface of this planet, what is man when no longer connected with society, or when he finds himself surrounded by a convulsed and a half-dissolved one!" [2] "I am a lover of peace,—what must I do? . . . I am conscious that I was happy before this unfortunate Revolution. I feel that I am no longer so; therefore I regret the change. . . . If I attach myself to the mother-country, which is three thousand miles from me, I become what is called an enemy to my own region; if I follow the rest of my countrymen, I become opposed to our ancient masters. Both extremes appear equally dangerous to a person of so little weight and consequence as I am, whose energy and example are of no avail. As to the argument, on which the dispute is founded, I know but little about it. Much has been said and written on both sides, but who has a judgment capacious

[1] "Letters," etc., 232–235. [2] Ibid. 270–271.

and clear enough to decide? . . . Books tell me so much, that they inform me of nothing. . . . Alas, how should I unravel an argument in which reason herself has given way to brutality and bloodshed? What then must I do? I ask the wisest lawyers, the ablest casuists, the warmest patriots, for I mean honestly. Great Source of Wisdom! inspire me with light sufficient to guide my benighted steps out of this intricate maze! Shall I discard all my ancient principles, shall I renounce that name, that nation, which I held once so respectable? . . . On the other hand, shall I arm myself against that country where I first drew breath, against the play-mates of my youth, my bosom-friends, my acquaintances? . . . Must I be called a parricide, a traitor, a villain; lose the esteem of all those whom I love, to preserve my own; be shunned like a rattle-snake, or be pointed at like a bear?" [1]

By its inclusion of these sombre and agonizing aspects of life in America, the book gains, as is most obvious, both in authenticity and in literary strength. Nevertheless, with even these tremendous abatements from the general scene of human felicity presented by the New World, the reader is tempted to infer that, after all, felicity is the permanent fact there, and that suffering is but a temporary accident. It is not hard to understand why, at such a time, a book like this should soon have made its way into the languages of Europe, particularly those of France,[2] Germany,[3] and Holland;[4] nor why it should have fascinated multitudes of

[1] "Letters," etc., 276–278.

[2] "Lettres d'un cultivateur Américain, écrites à W. S. Écuyer, Depuis l'année 1770, jusqu'à 1781. Traduites de L'Anglois par . . ." Paris: 1784. This translation was made by Crevecœur himself, who had been so long unaccustomed to French that his work abounds in Anglicisms. In 1787, there appeared in Paris a greatly enlarged edition, with map, plates, etc.

[3] "Briefe eines Amerikanischen Landmanns . . . Aus dem Englischen ins Französische von . . . und jetzt aus dem Französischen übersetst und mit einigen Anmerkungen begleitet, von Johann August Ephraim Götze." Drei Bänder. Leipzig: 1788.

[4] "Brieven van eenen Amerikaenschen Landman van Carlisle in Pennsilvanien, geschteven aen eenen zijner vrienden in Engeland. Uit het Engelsch." Ley-

readers in all parts of the continent, even beguiling many of them—too many of them, perhaps—to try their fortunes in that blithe and hospitable portion of the planet where the struggle for existence seemed almost a thing unknown. In England, likewise, the book won for itself, as was natural, a wide and a gracious consideration; its praises lasted among English men of letters as long, at least, as until the time of Hazlitt and Charles Lamb; while its idealized treatment of rural life in America wrought quite traceable effects upon the imaginations of Campbell, Byron, Southey, Coleridge, and furnished not a few materials for such captivating and airy schemes of literary colonization in America as that of "Pantisocracy."[1]

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den: 1784. Several titles in French, German, and Dutch are given by Sabin, "Dictionary," etc., v. 76–77.

[1] In 1801 was published in Paris, in three volumes, a copious work entitled "Voyage Dans La Haute Pensylvanie et Dans l'État de New York, par un Membre adoptif de la Nation Onéida. Traduit et publié par l'auteur des Lettres de 'un Cultivateur Americain." This assumed relation to the book was probably only a characteristic literary device of Crevecœur's for veiling his actual authorship of it.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

FRANKLIN IN THE LITERATURE OF THE REVOLUTION.

I.—Franklin's absence from America during the larger part of the Revolution—His vast influence on both sides of the Atlantic—Political uses of his fame as an electrician.

II.—His renown prior to 1764—What he had then done as a writer—Development of his literary powers down to old age—Quality of his humor.

III.—Classification of his writings during the period of the Revolution—Account of those apart from that controversy—His proposal to Madame Helvetius.

IV.—His urbane and humorous method in controversy—His attitude toward that of the Revolution—General view of his writings on the subject.

V.—His chief contributions to the Revolutionary dispute—His "Examination"—"Causes of American discontents"—"On the Rise and Progress of the Differences between Great Britain and her American Colonies"—"Dialogue between Britain, France, Spain, Holland, Saxony, and America"—"A Catechism relative to the English Debt"—His emblematic picture of Britannia dismembered.

VI.—His special use of satire in the form of ludicrous analogue—Burlesque of extravagant stories told in England respecting the colonies—"Rules for Reducing a Great Empire to a Small One"—"An Edict by the King of Prussia"—Great effects of the latter both in England and in America—His satire on the Anglo-German traffic in troops for America.

VII.—The history of the Revolution as composed of Franklin's passing comments on its successive stages—A continuous reading of all his Revolutionary writings, needful for an adequate impression of their worth or charm.

I.

ONE peculiarity attaching to Franklin's part in the American Revolution arises from the fact that nearly the whole of that Revolution took place in his absence. In November, 1764, he went to England as the agent of Pennsylvania, charged with the duty of protesting against the passage of the Stamp Act; and in England he remained for nearly

eleven years. Returning to America in May, 1775, he remained here only until October, 1776, when, "at the age of seventy-two or seventy-four, and at the risk of his head," as Horace Walpole wrote, he "bravely embarked on board an American frigate"[1] as commissioner to the court of France. In France he then remained until September, 1785. Coming back to America in that year, he died in 1790. Thus, during the twenty years which may be set apart as the period of the American Revolution, Franklin himself was in America only two years and a half.

Nevertheless, it is doubtful if any other brain than his had more to do with the shaping of the thought of the American Revolution, or any other hand a more potent pressure in the ordering of its event. Though separated from his country by the breadth of the Atlantic, never was there a moment during all those years when his country was not conscious of his inseparable and indispensable connection with the development of its destiny. Indeed, in that very spectacle of his personal absence from the scene of great transactions over which he was believed to wield a tremendous control, was something to give an added stimulus to the imaginations of men, and to enhance both in America and in Europe the vast influence which he had in both. From his modest lodgings in London during the first eleven years of the Revolution, from his quiet hotel in a suburb of Paris during the last eight years of it, he seemed to be the arch-magician, who, by his mastery of the secrets of nature, knew how to send abroad over land and sea invisible forces to sway mankind to his will. Under such circumstances, it is easy to perceive how his renown as an electrician threw a weird and an exaggerating light upon his prestige as a statesman and a revolutionist. "Our colonies might be well enough," was a saying among Englishmen in 1774, "were it not for Dr. Franklin, who has, with a brand

[1] Cited in his "Benjamin Franklin," 229, by J. T. Morse, Jr. The reader will notice that Franklin's age is slightly overstated by Walpole.

lighted from the clouds, set fire to all America."[1] In 1775, Samuel Johnson depicted Franklin as a "master of mischief" who had taught his countrymen "how to put in motion the engine of political electricity, . . . and to give the great stroke by the name of Boston."[2] Among the innumerable prints of Franklin scattered through France, were many that represented him as an old philosopher serenely seated in his chair, with flashes of lightning playing in the sky above his head, while beneath the portrait was some inscription attributing to him the power to use that lightning as his ally in the liberation of America and of mankind: as, under the drawing by Carmontelle,—

"On l'a vu désarmer les Tirans et les Dieux :"[3]

or, under the portrait by Cochin,—

"C'est l'honneur et l'appui du nouvel hémisphère ;
Les flots de l'Océan s'abaissent à sa voix ;
Il réprime ou dirige à son gré le tonnerre :
Qui désarme les dieux, peut-il craindre les rois ?"[4]

It was for a similar use that Turgot produced his incomparable line

"Eripuit coelo fulmen, septrumque tyrannis."[5]

With the grotesque humor even then characteristic of much popular writing in America, one of our own newspapers sent forth, in 1777, the droll announcement, that Dr. Franklin

[1] This is stated by Matthew Robinson, afterward Lord Rokeby, in his pamphlet entitled "Considerations on the Measures . . . with respect to the British Colonies in North America," 61.

[2] "Taxation no Tyranny," 68.

[3] Hale, "Franklin in France," Part i. 84–85.

[4] "The Works of Charles Sumner," viii. 13.

[5] "Œuvres de M. Turgot," ix. 140. A most interesting discussion of the origin and influence of Turgot's line, is given in "The Works of Charles Sumner," viii. 1–38. For its bearing on our relations with France during the American Civil War, Sumner's paper was originally published in November, 1863, in "The Atlantic Monthly," xii. 648–662.

was about " to produce an electrical machine of such wonderful force that, instead of giving a slight stroke to the elbows of fifty or a hundred thousand men who are joined hand in hand, it will give a violent shock even to nature herself, so as to disunite kingdoms, join islands to continents, and render men of the same nation strangers and enemies to each other; and that, by a certain chemical preparation from oil, he will be able to smooth the waves of the sea in one part of the globe, and raise tempests and whirlwinds in another, so as to be universally acknowledged for the greatest physician, politician, mathematician, and philosopher, this day living." [1]

II.

At the time of his voyage to England in 1764—that being his third voyage thither—he was already the most celebrated person that his country had then produced,—a fact sufficiently attested by Hume's salutation of him as " the first philosopher and indeed the first great man of letters " for whom Europe was beholden to America.[2] He was then fifty-eight years of age, and independent in his private circumstances. He had known a long and varied experience in commercial life, in politics, in legislative and administrative work. He had been a successful journalist, under the somewhat petty and clumsy conditions of journalism in those days. He was the projector of many mechanical

[1] " The New Jersey Gazette," for December 31, 1777, given in Frank Moore, " Diary of the American Revolution," i. 504.

[2] " The Complete Works of Benjamin Franklin," Bigelow ed., iii. 190. In the present chapter, my references to Franklin's writings will be mostly to the collection of them just mentioned, but inaccurately entitled " Complete." Even with this collection before him, every scholar will need to make use of the earlier collection by Jared Sparks. Since the death of Sparks, there has been a tendency among us to forget or to undervalue his important and indeed almost herculean labors as a pioneer in American historical scholarship. Happily this tendency, which was too ill-founded to have lasted long, has received a wholesome check through the publication, in 1893, of Professor Herbert B. Adams's careful work on " The Life and Writings of Jared Sparks."

and institutional devices for adding to the welfare and happiness of the human race. He was distinguished beyond all other men of his time in the one branch of science to which the men of his time were looking with the greatest interest. Finally, he was the author of a multitude of writings, covering a wide range of subjects, some of which had already made their way wherever the English language was known, and were read and relished for their shrewdness, their wit, their practical helpfulness, their alliance of prudence with generosity and good humor, their pure, pithy, and sparkling style.

It is a trait of Franklin as a man of letters, that while in his early life he took infinite pains to become a good writer, he did so, apparently, not from mere literary ambition, but chiefly as a means to some immediate practical end—particularly that of getting on in the world.[1] Accordingly, nearly everything he wrote was sent forth alone, and without his name, and was then allowed to shift for itself without any further pains or care on his part. This seeming freedom from solicitude as to the whereabouts or the well-being of his literary children, may be noted in the reply he made, during his second residence in England, to a request from Lord Kames for copies of all his published writings:—"I had daily expectations of procuring some of them from a friend to whom I formerly sent them when I was in America, and postponed writing to you, till I should obtain them; but at length he tells me he cannot find them. Very mortifying this to an author—that his works should so soon be lost! So I can only send you my 'Observations on the Peopling of Countries,' which happens to have been reprinted here; 'The Description of the Pennsylvania Fireplace,' a machine of my contriving; and some little sketches that have been printed in the 'Grand Magazine,' which I should hardly own, did I not know that your friendly partiality would make them seem at least tolerable."[2]

[1] For example, "Franklin's Works," Bigelow ed., i. 46, 47–49, 50–51, 146.

[2] "Franklin's Works," Bigelow ed., iii. 38–39.

The disposition, as shewn in these sentences, humorously to underrate his own performances and by all means to avoid every sort of self-glorification, does not leave him at any time; and whoever, in 1764, desired to know what Franklin had then done in letters, had still to get other testimony than Franklin's. Already, so early as in 1751, and without his knowledge, had been published in London a collection of his scientific writings, entitled "Experiments in Electricity made at Philadelphia"—a little book which was made larger in 1752, and again larger in 1754, and was also many times republished on the continent in Latin, French, German, and Italian. His greatest prolificacy, however, had been in writings of a more general kind, dealing shrewdly and often playfully with traits of human nature, with the vices and foibles of society, with ethical and religious subjects, with all aspects of current politics in America as touching finance, the treatment of Indians, the treatment of negroes, military preparations, forms of government both colonial and intercolonial, and the relations of the colonies to England. Besides innumerable juvenile experiments in prose and verse,—ballads, lampoons, burlesques, paragraphs, disquisitions, epigrams, emblems, proverbs,—the most of which, happily, are lost beyond recovery, —he had published the essays of "The Busy-Body"; several dialogues in the manner of Xenophon, such as "Public Men," and "Concerning Virtue and Pleasure"; the satirical letters of "Celia Single," "Anthony Afterwit," and "Alice Adder-tongue"; "Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion"; "Self-Denial not the Essence of Virtue"; "On True Happiness"; "The Waste of Life"; "A Modest Inquiry into the Nature of a Paper Currency"; "On Government"; "The Importance of Gaining and Preserving the Friendship of the Indians"; "Observations concerning the Increase of Mankind and the Peopling of Countries"; "Plain Truth, or, Serious Considerations on the Present State of the City of Philadelphia and the Province of Pennsylvania"; "Plan of Union for the Colonies";

and "The Interest of Great Britain Considered with regard to her Colonies and the Acquisition of Canada and Guadaloupe." Finally, no other class of his writings down to that time had appealed to so numerous and so eager a multitude of readers, as those in which he undertook to teach men the art of worldly prosperity, as "Necessary Hints to those that would be Rich," and "The Way to Wealth as Clearly Shown in the Preface of an Old Almanac entitled 'Poor Richard Improved,'" the latter containing the humorous and needle-witted speech of Father Abraham, which, as a recent biographer of Franklin has truly said, "is the most famous piece of literature the colonies produced."[1]

Undoubtedly, his best work in letters was done after the year 1764, and thenceforward down to the very year of his death; for, to a degree not only unusual but almost without parallel in literary history, his mind grew more and more vivacious with his advancing years, his heart more genial, his inventiveness more sprightly, his humor more gay, his style brighter, keener, more deft, more delightful. Yet even in these earlier writings of his, Franklin is always Franklin; and their vast popularity and effectiveness were due to qualities essentially the same as those which marked his later and still better work:—the pure English of the best writers and of the best talkers, simplicity, brevity, lightness of touch, strength without effort, the absence of declamation and of rhetorical parade, melody, point, extraordinary insight into human nature together with a frank identification of himself with its frailties, a singular desire and gift for helping other people to solve their most troublesome problems, and, finally, pervading all, and giving irresistible charm to all, his humor,—a humor which perfectly answers

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[1] John Bach McMaster, "Benjamin Franklin as a Man of Letters," 129; wherein is to be found, also, Franklin's account of a witch-trial at Mount Morris,—a specimen of his wit not included in any of Franklin's collected writings. Ibid. 71–74. The most of the productions mentioned by me in the text, have been reprinted within the first three volumes of the Bigelow edition of the Works of Franklin.

to Thackeray's fine definition of it as something made up of "wit and love," the best humor being "that which contains most humanity, that which is flavored throughout with tenderness and kindness."[1] Writing in 1758 to his sister Jane, whom he dearly loved, and who was very devout according to the severe Calvinistic manner of the period, Franklin quotes an acrostic wherein religion is likened to a building, of which faith, hope, and charity are the three stories. "Faith," says he, in commenting upon this bit of imagery, "is then the ground floor, hope is up one pair of stairs. My dear beloved Jenny, don't delight so much to dwell in those lower rooms, but get as fast as you can into the garret, for in truth the best room in the house is charity. For my part, I wish the house was turned upside down—it is so difficult, when one is fat, to go up stairs; and not only so, but I imagine hope and faith may be more firmly built upon charity, than charity upon faith and hope."[2]

Yet no one could read far in Franklin and conclude that his charity was of the soft and eyeless sort. To a writer who enquired by what means he could find out the faults of the girl whom he was courting, and especially whether she had the virtues she seemed to have, Franklin replied,—"Commend her among her female acquaintance."[3] As a maker of epigrams, the man who wrote, "The noblest question in the world is, what good may I do in it," and "Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, half shut afterwards," and "Deny thyself for self's sake," and "He is no clown that drives the plow, but he that does clownish things," and "He that can have patience, can have what he will," also wrote, "Three may keep a secret, if two of them are dead," and "Sal laughs at everything you say; why? because she has fine teeth," and "God heals—the Doctor takes the fee," and "Who has deceived thee so oft, as thyself?" and "Search others for their virtues, thyself for thy vices," and

[1] "Miscellaneous Essays, Sketches, and Reviews," by W. M. Thackeray, 319.
[2] The Works of Franklin, Sparks ed., vii. 184.
[3] The Works of Franklin, Bigelow ed., i. 318.

"The proof of gold is fire; the proof of a woman, gold; the proof of a man, woman." [1]

III.

For the period of the Revolution, the writings of Franklin fall naturally into two principal divisions—first, those connected with the Revolutionary controversy, and, secondly, those almost entirely apart from it.

Among the latter, of course, are to be reckoned his numerous papers on scientific discoveries and mechanical inventions; a considerable number of his personal letters—these being, perhaps, the wisest and wittiest of all his writings; many short sketches, usually playful in tone, often in the form of apologues or parables; finally, the first, and the best, part of his "Autobiography," which, during the hundred years succeeding its first publication in 1791, has probably been the most widely read book of its class in any language, and which, "treated as a piece of writing, and judged as literature . . . must be pronounced," according to a recent critic, "the equal of Robinson Crusoe, one of the few everlasting books in the English language." [2] Here,

[1] These and other examples of Franklin's proverbial philosophy are chiefly gathered from "Poor Richard's Almanac," and with many others are to be found collected in Bigelow's edition of his Works, i. 452–461; in James Parton, "Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin," i. 228–233. For the sources of many of Franklin's proverbs, the reader is also referred to my "History of American Literature during the Colonial Time," ii. 122.

[2] McMaster, "Benjamin Franklin as a Man of Letters," 269. All editions of the "Autobiography" prior to that of John Bigelow, Philadelphia, 1874, are incomplete and corrupt in text. Bigelow's edition is from the original manuscript, and, being supplemented by much other material from Franklin's writings, is entitled "The Life of Benjamin Franklin, Written by Himself": Three volumes, Philadelphia, 1874. For the first time in any collected edition of Franklin's writings, an unmutilated version of the "Autobiography" appeared in 1887 in the first volume of Bigelow's edition of "The Complete Works of Benjamin Franklin," wherein the editor has also given an amusing account of the recovery by him, in Paris and London in 1866 and 1867, of the original manuscript. Many curious details as to the vicissitudes through which this manuscript had gone, from the time it left the hand of its author, are given by Bigelow in the

then, as a product of Franklin's general literary activity during the Revolutionary period, is a considerable body of literature not concerned in the strifes of that bitter time, almost faultless in form, and so pervaded by sense, gayety, and kindness, as to be among the most precious and most delightful of the intellectual treasures of mankind.

Among so many pieces of writing, there must be an inequality of merit; and perhaps some of those which have been most frequently quoted and most loudly praised, are not altogether the most deserving of it, such as "The Whistle,"[1] and "An Economical Project,"[2] both of which bear traces of a conscious effort at pleasantry, and of pleasantry, also, which, as Lord Jeffrey said, has in it "something childish."[3] On the other hand, the delicious trifle entitled "The Ephemera: An Emblem of Human Life,"[4] and the "Dialogue between Franklin and the Gout,"[5] are executed, as Lord Jeffrey also declared, "with the lightness and spirit of genuine French compositions"; while "A Parable of Persecution,"[6] and we may add, "A Parable of Brotherly Love,"[7] "A Tale of Poor Jacques Montrésor,"[8] and the latter part of the essay on "The Handsome and Deformed Leg,"[9] have "all the point and facility of the fine pleasantries of Swift and Arbuthnot, with something more of directness and apparent sincerity."[10] It may be doubted, also, whether for spontaneity, grace, and pure frolic, all inspired

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first volume of his "Life of Benjamin Franklin," where it forms an introductory paper entitled "Historical Sketch of the Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Autograph Manuscript of Franklin's Memoirs of His Own Life."

[1] Works of Franklin, Bigelow ed., vi. 239–242.

[2] Ibid. 277–283.

[3] "Edinburgh Review," viii. 341.

[4] Works of Franklin, Bigelow ed., vi. 237–239.

[5] Ibid. vii. 140–149.

[6] Ibid. v. 372–374.

[7] Ibid. 376–378.

[8] Ibid. v. 261.

[9] Ibid. vi. 253–255.

[10] These words of Lord Jeffrey were applied only to the first of the pieces mentioned in the text. I have used them as justly descriptive of the others also.

and illuminated by that sort of gallantry which can best be described as Parisian, any of his so-called "Bagatelles" is now more charming than the love-challenge of this septuagenarian widower addressed to the brilliant and not immature Madame Helvetius, widow of the famous philosopher whose name she was so proud to bear:—"Mortified at the barbarous resolution pronounced by you so positively yesterday evening, that you would remain single the rest of your life as a compliment to the memory of your husband, I retired to my chamber. Throwing myself upon my bed, I dreamt that I was dead, and was transported to the Elysian Fields. I was asked whether I wished to see any persons in particular; to which I replied that I wished to see the philosophers. 'There are two who live here at hand in this garden; they are good neighbors, and very friendly towards one another.'—'Who are they?'—'Socrates and Helvetius.'—'I esteem them both highly; let me see Helvetius first, because I understand a little French, but not a word of Greek.' I was conducted to him; he received me with much courtesy, having known me, he said, by character, some time past. He asked me a thousand questions relative to the war, the present state of religion, of liberty, of the government in France. 'You do not inquire, then,' I said, 'after your dear friend Madame Helvetius; yet she loves you extremely. I was in her company not more than an hour ago.' 'Ah,' said he, 'you make me recur to my past happiness, which ought to be forgotten in order to be happy here. For many years I could think of nothing but her, though at length I am consoled. I have taken another wife, the most like her that I could find; she is not indeed altogether so handsome, but she has a great fund of wit and good sense, and her whole study is to please me. She is at this moment gone to fetch the best nectar and ambrosia to regale me; stay awhile, and you will see her.' 'I perceive,' said I, 'that your former friend is more faithful to you than you are to her; she has had several good offers, but has refused them all. I

will confess to you that I loved her extremely; but she was cruel to me, and rejected me peremptorily for your sake.' 'I pity you, sincerely,' said he, 'for she is an excellent woman, handsome and amiable. But do not the Abbé de la R. . . . and the Abbé M. . . . visit her?' 'Certainly they do; not one of your friends has dropped her acquaintance.' 'If you had gained the Abbé M. . . . with a bribe of good coffee and cream, perhaps you would have succeeded; for he is as deep a reasoner as Duns Scotus or St. Thomas; he arranges and methodizes his arguments in such a manner that they are almost irresistible. Or if by a fine edition of some old classic you had gained the Abbé de la R. . . . to speak against you, that would have been still better, as I always observed that when he recommended anything to her, she had a great inclination to do directly the contrary.' As he finished these words the new Madame Helvetius entered with the nectar, and I recognized her immediately as my former American friend, Mrs. Franklin! I reclaimed her, but she answered me coldly: 'I was a good wife to you for forty-nine years and four months, nearly half a century; let that content you. I have formed a new connection here, which will last to eternity.'—Indignant at this refusal of my Eurydice, I immediately resolved to quit those ungrateful shades, and return to this good world again, to behold the sun, and you! Here I am; let us avenge ourselves!"[1]

IV.

Of course, of chief importance for the purpose of our present studies, are those writings of Franklin which deal with the controversies of the American Revolution, and which, while they may be called controversial writings, illustrate in a delightful way Franklin's habit of eliminating from all controversy its churlish and merely rasping traits. He has himself told us how he came to acquire his method.

[1] Works of Franklin, Bigelow ed., vi. 269–271.

As a somewhat forward lad, he had fallen into a disputatious habit,—" a very bad habit," as he afterwards came to see. " Persons of good sense, I have since observed, seldom fall into it, except lawyers, university men, and men of all sorts that have been bred at Edinburgh." [1] From this disagreeable habit his escape seems to have been due, in the first instance, to his good luck in meeting with a copy of Xenophon's " Memorable Things of Socrates," wherein he found many examples of the Socratic method of conducting a dispute:—" I was charmed with it, adopted it, dropt my abrupt contradiction and positive argumentation, and put on the humble inquirer and doubter." " I continued this method some few years, but gradually left it, retaining only the habit of expressing myself in terms of modest diffidence, never using, when I advanced anything that may possibly be disputed, the words ' certainly,' ' undoubtedly,' or any others that give the air of positiveness to an opinion, but rather say, . . . ' I imagine it to be so,' or, ' it is so, if I am not mistaken.' " [2] Accordingly, in the long and angry disputes of the American Revolution, the part taken in them by Franklin was very much like that which Socrates might have taken had he been born in Boston in the early part of the eighteenth century, had he been for many years a printer and a politician in Philadelphia, and had he filled at London and Paris the diplomatic stations that were filled by Franklin. Indeed, the likeness between Franklin and Socrates was more than superficial; for besides the plebeian origin of both and some trace of plebeian manners which clung to both, and the strain of animal coarseness from which neither was ever entirely purified, they both had an amazing insight into human nature in all its grades and phases, they were both indifferent to literary fame, they were both humorists, they both applied their great intellectual gifts in a disciplinary but genial way to the improvement of their fellow-men, and in dealing controversially with the opinions of others they both understood and practised the

[1] Works of Franklin, Bigelow ed., i. 46–47.

[2] Ibid. 50–51.

strategy of coolness, playfulness, an unassuming manner, moderation of statement, the logical parallel, and irony.

Being officially employed in Europe during nearly the entire period of the American Revolution, he was everywhere recognized as something far more than the official representative of America. Through his fame in science and letters, through his intimacy with great men, through the picturesqueness and the fascination of his personality, finally, through his journalistic sense in detecting from day to day the set of the winds and tides of public opinion and how to avail himself of both in the interests of his country, he became, in fact, the one conspicuous interpreter to Europe of the grievances and the purposes of America, and the one conspicuous interpreter to America of the attitude of Europe.

In studying the mass of Franklin's literary contributions to the Revolutionary controversy between 1763 and 1783, we shall find much help in noting that his relation to that controversy had two strongly contrasted phases: first, his sincere and most strenuous desire that the dispute should not pass from the stage of words to that of blows, and thence to a struggle for American secession from the empire; and, secondly, after the stage of blows had been reached, his championship of American secession through war as the only safe or honorable course then left to his countrymen. The line of division between these two phases of opinion and action, falls across the spring and early summer of 1775. Prior to that time, all his writings, serious or jocose, are pervaded by the one purpose of convincing the English people that the American policy of their government was an injustice and a blunder, and of convincing the American people that their demand for political rights would certainly be satisfied, if persisted in steadily and without fear, but also without disloyalty and without unseemly violence. Subsequent to that time, having accepted with real sorrow the alternative of war and of war for American secession, all his writings, serious or jocose, are pervaded by the one purpose

of making that war a successful one,—a result to which, as a writer, he could best contribute by such appeals to public opinion in America as should nourish and quicken American confidence in their own cause, and by such appeals to public opinion in Europe as should win for that cause its moral and even its physical support. For reasons that must be obvious, his general literary activity was far greater during the first phase of this controversy, than during the second.

V.

Rising above the throng of his writings upon the American question in all its varying issues and aspects, from the beginning to the end, are some eight or ten productions which stand out as most worthy of mention in this place.

The first of these is the celebrated pamphlet entitled "The Examination of Doctor Benjamin Franklin, in the British House of Commons, relative to the Repeal of the American Stamp Act, in 1766."[1] Though a mere report of a certain memorable transaction in parliament, this pamphlet is, in reality, the result of a most consummate piece of political and editorial craftsmanship on the part of Franklin himself—a master without a master in the art of touching the springs of popular conviction and sympathy. First published in London in 1767, it had in England "a great run," as even Franklin permitted himself to acknowledge.[2] Being promptly translated into French, it was also widely circulated upon the continent, and for its pithy, dramatic, and amusing way of putting the American case, it was read by multitudes of people in many countries who thus got their first distinct impression as to the nature of the trouble then brewing in America, and as to the American people themselves—their number, character, resources, dispositions, opinions, purposes. Moreover, if the pamphlet thus gave a great impulse to the American cause in Europe —an impulse which was at once transmitted with tremendous

[1] Works of Franklin, Bigelow ed., iii. 407–450. [2] Ibid. iv. 28.

effect to America, also—not less did it contribute to the reputation and standing of Franklin himself on both sides of the Atlantic; for, by its incidental and modest exhibition of his marvelous presence of mind, under the shower of questions that were rained upon him in the House of Commons, of his unfailing resources both in knowledge and in argument, of his frankness, reasonableness, shrewdness, wit, temper, tact, good humor, it simply extended to the public outside the house the impression he had produced inside it, namely, that thenceforward, upon the American question, this elderly and quiet philosopher was to be reckoned with as a statesman and a diplomatist of the first order. "From this examination of Doctor Franklin," said the "Gentleman's Magazine" for July, 1767, "the reader may form a clearer and more comprehensive idea of the state and disposition of America, and of the expediency or inexpediency of the measure in question, and of the character and conduct of the minister who proposed it, than from all that has been written upon the subject in newspapers and pamphlets, under the titles of essays, letters, speeches, and considerations, from the first moment of its becoming the object of public attention till now."[1]

Early in the year 1768, under the guise of an Englishman having unusual acquaintance with the colonies, he published in the "London Chronicle" a long and sprightly article on the "Causes of American Discontents before 1768."[2] Though greatly mutilated and weakened by the editor of the journal in which it first appeared,—so that, as Franklin complained, with its teeth drawn and its nails pared, it could "neither scratch nor bite," and could only "paw and mumble."[3]—there was enough left of it to shew Franklin's great skill in winning favor for his side of the question by a novel and a half-grumbling presentation of its claims, and even by an ironical disparagement of them.

[1] "The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle," xxxvii. 308.

[2] Reprinted in the Works of Franklin, Bigelow ed., iv. 97–111.

[3] Ibid. iv. 98 note.

So, too, in 1774, over the signature of "A Londoner," he contributed to the "Public Advertiser" a series of short articles "On the Rise and Progress of the Differences between Great Britain and her American Colonies,"[1] in which, with the frankness of a discontented Englishman, he caustically exposes the dunce-like methods of the ministry in dealing with the American problem, and the stupid pertinacity of those writers for the English press who seemed to think that they were solving that problem by calling the Americans hard names and by propagating all sorts of calumnies against them. "Surely," exclaims the "Londoner" at the close of his last article, "the great commerce of this nation with the Americans is of too much importance to be risked in a quarrel which has no foundation but ministerial pique and obstinacy! . . . Will our reviling them as cheats, hypocrites, scoundrels, traitors, cowards, tyrants, etc., etc., according to the present mode in all our papers, make them more our friends, more fond of our merchandize? Did ever any tradesman succeed, who attempted to drub customers into his shop? And will honest John Bull, the farmer, be long satisfied with servants that before his face attempt to kill his plough-horses?"[2]

Probably no writer ever understood better than he how to make dull subjects lively, and how, by consequence, to attract readers to the consideration of matters in themselves unattractive. As he well knew, the European public, whether upon the continent or in Great Britain, were not likely to give their days and nights to the perusal of long and solemn dissertations on the rights and wrongs of his countrymen in the other hemisphere. Accordingly, such dissertations he never gave them, but, upon occasion, brief and pithy and apparently casual statements of the American case; exposing, also, the weak points of the case against his own, by means of anecdotes, epigrams, jeux-d'esprit; especially contriving to throw the whole argument into some sort of dramatic form,—as in "A Dialogue between Britain,

[1] Works of Franklin, Bigelow ed., v. 323–338. [2] Ibid. 337–338.

France, Spain, Holland, Saxony, and America,'' [1] or as in "A Catechism relative to the English Debt" [2]; or, again, setting forth in pictorial form some stirring aspect of the dispute, as, in 1774, his famous emblematic drawing to illustrate "the result of England's persistence in her policy towards the colonies," [3] wherein Britannia is represented as a huge desolate female-figure occupying a conspicuous place on the globe, but with all her limbs—that is, her colonies—cut off and lying scattered about—these dismembered limbs being severally labelled Virginia, New England, Pennsylvania, and New York. In this sorry plight, as Franklin says in the "Explanation" accompanying the picture, Britannia lifts "her eyes and mangled stumps to Heaven; her shield, which she is unable to wield, lies useless by her side; her lance has pierced New England; the laurel branch has fallen from the hand of Pennsylvania; the English oak has lost its head, and stands a bare trunk, with a few withered branches; briers and thorns are on the ground beneath it; the British ships have brooms at their topmast heads, denoting their being on sale; and Britannia herself is seen sliding off the world,—no longer able to hold its balance,—her fragments overspread with the label, 'Date obolum Belisario.'" [4]

VI.

It remains to be mentioned that Franklin's favorite weapon in political controversy—a weapon which, perhaps, no other writer in English since Dean Swift has handled with so much cleverness and effect—was that of satire in the form of ludicrous analogue, thereby burlesquing the acts and pretensions of his adversary, and simply overwhelming him with ridicule. His very first dash into the Revolutionary controversy after his arrival in England in 1764, furnishes a case in point; when, in a letter to a newspaper, over the signature of "A Traveler," he chaffs the English

[1] Works of Franklin, Bigelow ed., vi. 118–122.
[2] Ibid. 122–124.
[3] Ibid. v. 416–417.
[4] Ibid. 416–417.

public about their habit of swallowing preposterous stories concerning the colonies, as then commonly told them in their journals,—himself, however, ironically maintaining the truth of these very stories, and even capping them by others just as true: as the one about the tails of the American sheep being "so laden with wool, that each has a little car or wagon on four little wheels to support and keep it from trailing on the ground"; or, as the one about the inhabitants of Canada "making preparations for a cod and whale fishery this summer in the upper lakes. Ignorant people may object that the upper lakes are fresh, and that cod and whales are salt-water fish; but let them know, sir, that cod, like other fish, when attacked by their enemies, fly into any water where they can be safest; that whales, when they have a mind to eat cod, pursue them wherever they fly, and that the grand leap of the whale in the chase up the Falls of Niagara is esteemed, by all who have seen it, as one of the finest spectacles in nature." [1]

Moreover, with Franklin, as had been the case with Dean Swift before him, this species of satire took a form at once so realistic and so comically apt, as to result in several examples of brilliant literary hoaxing—a result which, in the controversy then going on, was likely to be beneficial to the solemn and self-satisfied British Philistine of the period, since it compelled him for once to do a little thinking, and also to stand off and view his own portrait as it then appeared to other people, and even in spite of himself to laugh at his own portentous and costly stupidity in the management of an empire that seemed already grown too big for him to take proper care of. Of Franklin's work in the vein of literary burlesque, three pieces claim mention for their preëminent wit and point:—first, "Rules for Reducing a Great Empire to a Small One," [2] secondly, "An Edict by the King of Prussia," [3] both printed in the English newspapers in the early autumn of 1773; and, thirdly, a pre-

[1] Works of Franklin, Bigelow ed., iii. 378–379. [2] Ibid. v. 233–234.
[3] Ibid. 214–220.

tended letter of instructions "From the Count de Schaumbergh to the Baron Hohendorf commanding the Hessian Troops in America,"[1] this being dated at Rome, 18 February, 1777.

Referring to the first two of these pieces, soon after their publication, Franklin told his son that his object in writing them was to expose the conduct of England toward the colonies, "in a short, comprehensive, and striking view, and stated, therefore, in out-of-the-way forms, as most likely to take the general attention." "In my own mind," he adds, "I preferred the first, as a composition, for the quantity and variety of the matter contained, and a kind of spirited ending of each paragraph. But I find that others here generally prefer the second."[2] Probably, the chief reason for the greater attention paid in England to the second piece is to be found in the more direct and palpable character of its satire, dealing as it did with ideas and even phrases then uncommonly familiar to the English public. It made its appearance in the midst of the busy preparations then in progress for sending out the guileful tea-ships; when, of course, the very air was vibrant with allusions to the almost limitless claims of the mother country upon her American children, to the propriety and beauty of the English laws for controlling the commerce and manufactures of the colonies, and, above all, to the base ingratitude of England's American children in objecting to being taxed at will by their affectionate national parent. Under these circumstances it occurred to Franklin to set forth in some lively way the absurdity of all this; especially, that it was an argument which proved much more than its inventors would care to be responsible for. If, indeed, England had such limitless claims upon the American colonies because she was their

[1] Works of Franklin, Bigelow ed., vi. 74–78. This, of course, is the English version of the letter; but it was a part of the jest to assume that the letter was originally written in German or in French—probably in French. The French version is given by M. de Lescure, in his "Correspondance secrète inédite sur Louis XVI.," etc., i. 31–33.

[2] Ibid. 241–242.

mother country, why had not Germany, the mother country of England, the same claims upon her? This idea, accordingly, Franklin worked out in a manner thoroughly Franklinian,—causing to be published, first, in the "Public Advertiser," what purported to be a solemn edict of Frederick the Great,—"Given at Potsdam, this twenty-fifth day of the month of August, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-three, and in the thirty-third year of our reign,"[1]—wherein that monarch, in a tone of command very natural to him, uses the characteristic words of the English acts of parliament regulating the commerce and manufactures of the American colonies, and then proclaims on behalf of Prussia the same regulations over "the island of Great Britain": "And all persons in the said island are hereby cautioned not to oppose in any wise the execution of this our edict, or any part thereof, such opposition being high treason; of which all who are suspected shall be transported in fetters from Britain to Prussia, there to be tried and executed according to the Prussian law."[2]

In England this travesty made a great hit;—all the more so for the reason, as Franklin explained to his son, "that people in reading it were, as the phrase is, 'taken in,' till they had got half through it, and imagined it a real edict, to which mistake, I suppose, the king of Prussia's character contributed."[3] Some of its effects, the author himself had the good luck to witness, and in a way of which he has left an amusing account. Having sent his satire to the newspaper, he immediately went down to the country-seat of his friend, Lord le Despencer, where among other guests happened to be Paul Whitehead, the poet. One morning while most of the company were chatting in the breakfast-parlor, Whitehead "came running in to us out of breath, with the paper in his hand. 'Here!' says he, 'here 's news for ye! Here 's the king of Prussia claiming a right to this kingdom!' All stared, and I as much as anybody; and he went

[1] Works of Franklin, Bigelow ed., v. 220.
[2] Ibid. 219.
[3] Ibid. 243.

on to read it. When he had read two or three paragraphs, a gentleman present said: 'Damn his impudence; I dare say we shall hear by next post, that he is upon his march with one hundred thousand men to back this.' Whitehead, who is very shrewd, soon after began to smoke it, and looking in my face said, 'I 'll be hanged if this is not some of your American jokes upon us.' The reading went on, and ended with abundance of laughing, and a general verdict that it was a fair hit." [1] Indeed, Lord Mansfield, who, of course, was not in that company, called the satire "very able and very artful," and expressed the belief that it "would do mischief by giving here a bad impression of the measures of government, and in the colonies by encouraging them in their contumacy," [2] all of which, certainly, was precisely the effect which it was intended to have.

The last of the three specimens of satire above mentioned, the Count de Schaumbergh's letter of instructions, seems to have been written by Franklin not long after his arrival in France in the latter part of 1776, and was intended to hold up to the execration of the civilized world both parties in the transaction by which the king of England bought of certain petty princes in Germany the troops with which to butcher his late American subjects. In some respects, this is the most powerful of all the satirical writings of Franklin. More, perhaps, than is the case with any other work of his, it displays, with marvelous subtlety and wit, that sort of genius which can reproduce with minute and perfect verisimilitude the psychological processes of some monstrous crime against human nature,—a crime which it thus portrays both to the horror and the derision of mankind. "Since the death of Swift," says John Bigelow in referring to this pretended letter of the Hessian trafficker in the bodies and souls of his subjects, "who, besides Franklin, was sufficiently a master of this kind of satire to have written it?" [3]

[1] Works of Franklin, Bigelow ed., v. 243. [2] Ibid. 224.

[3] Works of Franklin, vi. 74 note. M. de Lescure, in giving the French version of this letter, makes no allusion to Franklin, but says, in a foot-note:

VII.

As Franklin was by far the greatest man of letters on the American side of the Revolutionary controversy, so a most luminous and delightful history of the development of thought and emotion during the Revolution might be composed, by merely bringing together detached sayings of Franklin, humorous and serious, just as these fell from his tongue or pen in the successive stages of that long conflict: it would be a trail of light across a sea of storm and gloom.

Nevertheless, not by illustrative fragments of what he wrote or said, any more than by modern descriptions however vivid, can an adequate idea be conveyed of the mass, the force, the variety, the ease, the charm, of his total work as a writer during those twenty tremendous years. Undoubtedly, his vast experience in affairs and the sobriety produced by mere official responsibility, had the effect of clarifying and solidifying his thought, and of giving to the lightest products of his genius a sanity and a sureness of movement which, had he been a man of letters only, they could hardly have had in so high a degree. It is only by a continuous reading of the entire body of Franklin's Revolutionary writings, from grave to gay, from lively to severe, that any one can know how brilliant was his wisdom, or how wise was his brilliance, or how humane and gentle and helpful were both. No one who, by such a reading, procures for himself such a pleasure and such a benefit, will be likely to miss the point of Sydney Smith's playful menace to his daughter,—"I will disinherit you, if you do not admire everything written by Franklin."

"Il est évident, pour quiconque lit cette lettre, qu'elle n'est qu'un jeu d'esprit et de malignité destiné a railler le commerce insouciant et lucratif d'hommes (la traite des soldats) qu'on accusait les princes allemands, surtout de Hanovre et de Hesse, de faire cyniquement avec les puissances belligérantes en quête de mercenaires." "Correspondance secrète," etc., i. 31.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE WRITERS OF HISTORY.

I.—Two expressions of the historic spirit during the Revolution—One resulting in local colonial history—The other resulting in histories of the Revolutionary movement and therefore representing the colonies as moving forward into statehood and a new national life.

II.—Stephen Hopkins as a representative of the historic spirit applied to local themes—His fragment on "The Planting and Growth of Providence," 1762 and 1765—Amos Adams and his "Concise Historical View of the Planting and Progressive Improvement of New England," 1769—Nathan Fiske's "Historical Discourse" for the town of Brookfield, 1775.

III.—Robert Proud, and his "History of Pennsylvania."

IV.—How religious affiliations overleaped colonial barriers and led to more comprehensive historical work—Morgan Edwards and his "Materials towards a History of the American Baptists," 1770—The intelligence and validity of his method as an historian—The scope of his work—Examples of its quality.

V.—Another intercolonial historian is Isaac Backus, preacher and politician—His "History of New England, with Particular Reference to the Denomination Called Baptists," 1777 and 1784—His motive in writing history—His method strictly scientific, notwithstanding his lack of disinterestedness—Value of his work.

VI.—Thomas Hutchinson as an historian dealing with themes both colonial and Revolutionary—The peculiar value of his contributions to American history—His writing of history but the by-play of a busy man of affairs—His ancestry—His career as merchant and politician—His attitude toward the Revolutionary controversy.

VII.—Hutchinson's early passion for the study of history, particularly constitutional history—His preparation for the writing of it—His idea of the importance of primary documents, and his unrivaled collection of them—The publication in 1764 of the first volume of his "History of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay"—His work in writing the second volume interrupted by a Boston mob in August, 1765, looting his house and destroying many of his papers—Fortunate recovery of the manuscript of the second volume—Its publication in 1767—Characteristics of this volume.

VIII.—Hutchinson summoned to England in 1774—His own special purpose in going there—Failure of his efforts to dissuade the government from its im-

politic measures towards the colonies—The sorrows of his exile in England —Resumes there his "History," the third volume of which he finishes in 1778—Contains his own version of the Revolution down to the close of his administration as governor of Massachusetts—Its first publication in 1828.

IX.—Traits of Hutchinson as an historian—The distinctive tone of each of his three volumes—His evident truthfulness—His judicial tone—The severest test of his fairness applied in the writing of his third volume—An examination of Palfrey's estimate of him as an historian—The essence of his politics with reference to the Revolutionary dispute—His portrait of Governor Joseph Dudley, as in some respects a portrait of himself.

X.—A pretended historical work by Samuel Peters, "A General History of Connecticut," 1781—The career of Peters—The notoriety acquired by his book—Its grotesque fabrications in the service of calumny—Clearly not intended by himself as a mere historical romance or a satire in the form of burlesque history—Its author's mania for facts which never had an existence.

XI.—The development of the military stage of the Revolution accompanied by a general perception of its historic significance, and of the need of making and preserving records of it—Examples of historical work in its crudest form—Especially the diaries of eye-witnesses of its events—James Thacher's "Military Journal of the American Revolutionary War"—"A Journal of Occurrences," by Major Return Jonathan Meigs—George Rogers Clark's "Campaign in the Illinois"—Tench Tilghman's "Journal," and his "Diary"—"The Journal of Lieutenant William Feltman."

XII.—The beginnings of professed histories of the Revolution—Jonas Clark's "Brief Narrative" of the events of April 19, 1775—David Ramsay as a collector of materials for a history of the Revolution—William Henry Drayton as an historian of the Revolution—A portion of his work burned by order of Congress—His two volumes on the history of the war in the southern colonies.

XIII.—Mercy Warren as an historian of the Revolution—Her great opportunities for knowing the men and events of the period—Her "History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution"—Its undisguised partisanship—Its literary qualities—Its historical portraits.

XIV.—William Gordon, and his indefatigable efforts to obtain oral and written testimony concerning the Revolution—His evident purpose to be truthful and fair—Fearing American prejudices against an impartial history of the Revolution, he goes to England to publish his work, but encounters there similar prejudices—How his manuscript was tampered with—The great value of his work, even as thus mutilated.

I.

WITHIN the two decades of the American Revolution, are to be found two distinct expressions of the historic spirit among this people. In the first place, from a consciousness

of the meaning and worth of the unique social experiments then already made by each of these thirteen little republics, came the impulse which led to the writing of their local history. Afterward, from a similar consciousness of the meaning and worth of the immense events which began to unfold themselves in the collective political and military experience of these thirteen little republics, then rapidly melting together into a larger national life under the fires of a common danger, came the impulse which led to the writing of their general history. It is necessary for us to note the more important documents which still testify to the activity and the vigor of such historic spirit in this land, amid circumstances not at all favorable to its cultivation.

II.

An early and a genuine representative of the historic spirit was Stephen Hopkins, the Rhode Island statesman, who, as early as in October, 1762, while governor of that colony, began to publish in a weekly newspaper the results of his researches into "The Planting and Growth of Providence." After printing, in that year and in 1765, some eight chapters of his intended book, he was obliged by public occupations to break off these congenial labors—to which, indeed, he was never afterward able to return. What he thus wrote is therefore but a fragment, telling the story of Rhode Island only from its origin to the year 1745. Though but a fragment, however, it is quite enough to reveal in its author the best qualities of an historian,—love of truth, fair-mindedness, the power to see the meaning of facts and to set them in order, finally the gift of lucid, neat, and impressive statement.[1]

[1] The publication of Hopkins's fragment began in "The Providence Gazette" for October 20, 1762. Being then suddenly stopped, it did not begin again until January 12, 1765, when the "Gazette" reprinted the portion already published. The publication of the remaining portions of the work, was then kept up in the "Gazette" for January 12, 19; February 2, 9, 16; March 16, 30. The worth of this bit of early American history was fittingly recognized by the

Not unworthy of a passing glance, as embodying in rudimental form the true temper and method of history, is Amos Adams's "Concise Historical View[1] of the Perils, Hardships, Difficulties and Discouragements which have attended the Planting and Progressive Improvement of New England," published in Boston in 1769. The author was minister of the First Church of Roxbury, a graduate of Harvard, an orator of captivating and stimulating gifts, a leader of men, a martyr at last to his uncalculating zeal in the service of the sick and the troubled.[2] That he had the historian's hand and brain is shewn by the cleverness with which, in this little book, he plucks from a vast medley of facts the salient and characteristic ones; by his lucid generalization; by the sobriety of his treatment of the ultimate dispute with the English ministry.[3]

On the last day of the year 1775, in the midst of all the tumult and terror of war, Nathan Fiske, pastor of the Congregational Church in Brookfield, Massachusetts, delivered to his people a calm and carefully wrought "Historical Dis-

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officers of the Massachusetts Historical Society, who, in 1822, gave a reprint of it in their "Collections," 2 series, ix. 166–203. In 1885, a reprint was given in the "Collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society," vii. 13–65. This version is much to be preferred, as it is annotated with characteristic thoroughness, precision, and good taste by Mr. William Eaton Foster, who, in his well-known monograph on "Stephen Hopkins," Part i. 134–135; Part ii. 161, 165, 167, 191, 200–201, had already called attention to that statesman's fondness and aptitude for historical work.

[1] It is a note of the times that this capital sketch of American colonial history was struck off in the shape of two discourses actually delivered from the pulpit, with political and moral lessons of local application. It was reprinted in London in 1770, with a slight change of title, and with a curtailment of the aforesaid lessons.

[2] A peculiarly life-like portrait of Amos Adams was drawn in miniature by his contemporary and friend, John Eliot, in his "Biographical Dictionary," 4–5.

[3] Being a man of considerable range in action and sympathy, Adams had repeatedly sent to the press his discourses, the best of them, probably, being his sermon, in 1759, "On the Reduction of Quebec"; and his two sermons, in 1767, "On Religious Liberty," published in the year following that of their delivery.

course,"[1] relating to that town: a true example of the historic spirit applied to local experience; a monograph strong in fiber, and having the added charm of its author's sincere, elastic, and clean-cut style. Of course, it was impossible for him at such a time to deal only with their past; and there is even yet something to thrill the heart in the closing paragraphs in which he sets forth the havoc and horror of that year, and compares the barbarity of their own kinsmen —the civilized foe then ready to spring at their throats— with the pitiless ways of that savage and alien enemy against whom they had for so many generations been upon their guard.

III.

A very sombre representative of the historic spirit in America during the period here treated of, was Robert Proud, a Quaker, born in England in 1728, and from 1759 until his death in 1813 a reluctant and an unassimilated denizen of Pennsylvania. A bachelor, a school-master, a recluse, with a cloud of sorrow and of mystery hanging over his life, using Latin with more facility than English, he was wholly out of accord with the hopes, the ambitions, the tendencies of the age and neighborhood upon which his lot was cast. Being opposed to war in general, and to the war of the American Rebellion in particular, he nursed in solitude the bitterness of his spirit, which, indeed, must have grown more bitter from his attempts to utter it in verse like this:

"For, what man,
Though of every thing bereft,
Though no earthly solace left,
Here with rebel powers would dwell,
And not shun the state of hell—
While he can!"[2]

[1] Published, Boston, 1776.

[2] "Memoirs of the Hist. Soc. of Pennsylvania," vol. i. ed. of 1864, p. 488. Between pages 486 and 492 are given other examples of this poor man's excruciating struggles with English verse.

Tall, gaunt, of a stern countenance, his beak-like nose overhung by heavy eye-brows, a huge and patriarchal cocked hat predominating over his tremendous gray wig, his right hand grasping a long ivory-headed cane, he was occasionally to be seen striding in melancholy grandeur along the roads or lanes in the neighborhood of Philadelphia—a figure of terrifying picturesqueness—frowning with implacable disapproval upon all the ways and works of the people among whom he was doomed to dwell.[1]

It was in such a mood, it was in the midst of such conditions, that this bilious and sorrowful pedagogue passed the painful years from 1776 to 1780, in writing "The History of Pennsylvania, in North America, from the Original Institution and Settlement of that Province under the first Proprietor and Governor William Penn, in 1681, till after the Year 1742,"[2]—a book of very exact and extremely solidified information, wherein the author quotes long documents, elaborates moral platitudes, and tells the truth—as he sees it—in slow, weighty, and sleep-diffusing sentences.

IV.

A noteworthy example of the true historic spirit then at work among us—at work after the right method even when expressing itself in the crudest form—is to be seen in a book entitled "Materials towards a History of the American Baptists,"—the author being Morgan Edwards, a Welshman, who, after acquiring some distinction as a Baptist preacher in England and in Ireland, settled in Philadelphia in 1761 in order to take charge of a Baptist congregation there.[3]

The work was planned by him on a large scale. It was to

[1] The best account of Proud to be met with, is by Charles West Thomson, entitled "Notices of the Life and Character of Robert Proud," and forming pages 417–435 of "Memoirs of the Hist. Soc. of Pennsylvania," vol. i., ed. of 1864.

[2] Published in two volumes, Philadelphia, 1797–1798.

[3] A brief sketch of his singular character and career may be seen in W. B. Sprague, "Annals," etc., vi. 82–85.

include all the American colonies in which the Baptists had made any history,—that is, in which they had ever been; and it was to extend to at least twelve volumes. Only the first two volumes were ever written, and these were published in Philadelphia in 1770. The author had, indeed, gathered together the substance of a third volume; but this, as he informed the public, he could not expect to see printed, "because of an asthma and atrophy, which hurry him out of the world."[1] In spite of this announcement of his speedy exit, the Welsh fire within him seems to have blazed up again, and to have been more than a match even for "an asthma and atrophy"; for, instead of being hurried out of the world in 1770, he held his own in it just twenty-five years longer, dying at his leisure in 1795.

The intelligence and the validity of his method as an historian are well shewn in his own frank avowal that the data for his two volumes were "collected partly from knowledge, partly from church-books, and partly from informations. Collections from the two former may be exact; but those from the other may not be so, because old memories are unsafe records. If any should discover errors and give notice thereof to the editor, he will take the first opportunity to rectify them, and be much obliged to the informers."[2]

The first volume has to do with the Baptists of Pennsylvania, the second with those of New Jersey. In the former colony, they are of five sorts—"First Day Baptists," "Seventh Day Baptists," "Keithians," "Tunckers," and "Mennonites"; in the latter colony they are of only four sorts—"First Day Baptists," "Seventh Day Baptists," "Tunckers," and "Rogerenes." Dealing, then, in its place and order, with each of these subdivisions of his sect, the author proceeds to spread out before us a multitude of local and personal details—the pettiness and aridity of which are in his comment often relieved by some touch of tender wisdom, of shrewd observation, or of satiric humor.

[1] "Materials," etc., ii. 151.

[2] "Advertisement," in vol. i. signed by the author.

Thus, of those German Baptists who were called "Tunckers," he says that the name was given to them "in derision"; that it came from the German word "'tunken,' to put a morsel into sauce," and that it "is as much as to say 'Sops.'" Nevertheless, "as the term signifies Dippers, they may rest content with the nickname, since it is the fate of Baptists in all countries to bear some cross or other."[1]

His account of the Rogerene Baptists, while evidently fair, has an amusing sub-acid flavor. "This distinction of a sect took its rise at New London in Connecticut, about the year 1674," when one John Rogers of that town formed a church of his own, the first members of it being his father, his mother, two of his brothers, and his sister. As to its creed, the chief peculiarities were these four: "All days are alike since the death of Christ"; "No medicines are to be used, nor doctors nor surgeons employed"; "No grace at meals"; "All prayers to be mental and not vocal, except when the spirit of prayer compels to the use of the voice."[2] Having thus founded his church, it was proper that John Rogers should take an early occasion to shew a strong hand as its ruler. Accordingly, his "first act of discipline was the excommunication of his brother Jonathan, for using medicine, and refusing to do things which would bring on him the lash of the civil magistrate." Moreover, "this John Rogers was not only the founder of the sect . . . but the hero of the cause in suffering, and writing, and defying." In fact, the last seems to have been rather his favorite and most shining function. "He had not been long at the head of the cause, before he printed and published" a sort of encyclical, in which he made "an open declaration of war against the great red dragon, and against the beast to which he gives power, and against the false church which rides upon the beast, and against the false prophets who are established by the dragon and the beast, and against the image of the beast." To this he added "a proclamation of deri-

[1] "Materials," etc., i. 64.

[2] Ibid. 147–148.

sion against the sword of the devil's spirit,—which is prisons, stocks, whips, fines, and revilings." [1]

But as even this proclamation failed, in the opinion of the Rogerenes, sufficiently to enliven the situation, they proceeded to more active measures. For example, as it was their duty "to exert themselves" against the idol called the Sabbath, they would on that day "be at work near meeting-houses, and take work into meeting-houses—the women knitting, and the men whittling and making splits for baskets, and every now and then contradicting the preachers. This was seeking persecution; and they had plenty of it, insomuch that the New Englanders left some of them neither liberty, nor property, nor whole skins." While, however, the New Englanders thus made the mistake of taking the Rogerenes seriously, and of gratifying them with the boon of persecution, the people of New Jersey, being either wiser in their generation, or else blessed with a keener perception of the ludicrous aspect of things, quite disconcerted them in the performance of such antics, by a contemptuous gentleness which seemed to announce the Rogerenes as mild lunatics, rather than as heroes or martyrs. "I do not find," says our author, "that the Rogerenes have suffered by fines or corporal punishment in Jersey more than once, and that was for disturbing a Presbyterian congregation at Baskingridge. In other places, they have been taken out of meeting-houses with much pleasantry, and shut up in stables, penfolds, and once in a hog-pen—till worship was over." "Paul speaks of some people 'who pleased not God and were contrary to all men.' It were uncharitable to apply this to the Rogerenes; but facts, for a course of one hundred and sixteen years, look too much like—'contrary to all men.' And as for the spirit that actuated them, it was as different from the meek and humble spirit of Jesus, as any two things could be. . . . Had the Rogerenes lived in the time of the Cynics, they would have been ranked with them." [2]

[1] "Materials," etc., ii. 147–148.

[2] Ibid 149–150.

Finally, as to John Rogers himself, the historian finishes a portrait of him by two strokes of the pen, which almost deserve to be called masterly. The founder of the sect of Rogerenes certainly desired persecution, but not persecution in every possible form: "what troubled John Rogers most was their taking his wife from him, and giving her to a lawyer of the name of Pratt." Nevertheless, even he had his revenge—if not upon the "lawyer of the name of Pratt," at least upon the rest of the world: for "he published a commentary on the Revelation. He that hath patience to read it, let him read it." [1]

V.

A man who lacked many of the literary qualifications for an historian but who yet had the root of the matter in him, was Isaac Backus, a Baptist minister, born in 1724 at Norwich, Connecticut, and both upon his father's side and upon his mother's allied to some of the oldest and most honorable families in New England.[2] He began to preach when he was but twenty-two, and he continued to preach until he was eighty-two; having been, during all those years, tireless in labor, a visitor of the sick and sorrowing, in journeys often, in conflicts many,—above all things, a father of his despised sect, a champion of its civil and religious rights, a dauntless apostle of the doctrine—then almost a paradox among us—of the total separation of church and state. In 1772, elected by the Baptist churches in Massachusetts, he became their "agent," and in their name he went before congresses, conventions, and legislatures, doing much to shape the new laws of that new time into conformity with the majestic principle that, in matters religious, no man may be interfered with by the civil authority.

This man it was who, being preacher, pastor, politician,

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[1] "Materials," etc., ii. 149.

[2] A brief sketch of him is to be found in Sprague, "Annals," etc., vi. 54–58. The chief authority, however, is "A Memoir of the Life and Times of the Rev. Isaac Backus," by Alvah Hovey.

agitator, became also historian—in the latter capacity illustrating some of the primary virtues appertaining thereto. So effectually did he strive in this task, even amid the distractions of the great war, that he was able to publish, in 1777, the first volume, and, in 1784, the second volume, of his monumental work,—"A History of New England, with particular Reference to the Denomination of Christians called Baptists: containing the first principles and settlements of the Country; the rise and increase of the Baptist churches therein; the introduction of arbitrary power under the cloak of religion; the Christian testimonies of the Baptists and others against the same, with their sufferings under it, from the beginning to the present time."[1]

His call to this great office of historian did not come to him either through literary ambition or even through the antiquarian zest: it came, apparently, through his belief that, ever since the settlement of New England, monstrous crimes against religious liberty had been there perpetrated by the civil and religious leaders of the commonwealth; and that, as the history of the commonwealth had been written chiefly by the very men who had perpetrated these crimes, or by their natural representatives, its history had never been truly or fairly written. "As every one is orthodox to himself, they who have oppressed others have always denied it." "If it should be found that near all the histories of this country which are much known, have been written by persons who thought themselves invested with power to act as lawgivers and judges for their neighbors, under the name either of orthodoxy or of immediate power from heaven, the inference will be strong that our affairs have never been set in so clear a light as they ought to be."[2]

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[1] The first volume brings the history down to 1690; the second, to 1784. A third volume was published in 1796, continuing the history to that year. An abridgement of the three volumes was published in one volume in 1804, the history being once more brought down to date. Finally, a new edition of the original work, revised by David Weston, was published in two volumes, in 1871.

[2] "A History of New England," i. Pref.

Therefore, to set "our affairs" in a clearer light—in other words, with respect to the history of New England, to drag to the surface a series of tremendous facts which have hitherto been thrust below and kept out of sight—such is the principal purpose of this historian. He accuses his predecessors of being partisan; and if, in the opposite direction, he is equally partisan, he would perhaps insist that it was his duty to be so, in order to redress the long-disturbed balance of historic testimony. "Only the author must say, that he has acted under a full belief that with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again; so that we cannot injure others in any case, without therein wronging our own souls." [1]

At any rate, he is not to be turned aside from his stern task of exposing evil-doers, merely because those evil-doers happen to be dead and to be venerated. "The greatest objection that I have heard against this design is, that we ought not to rake up the ashes of our good fathers, nor to rehearse those old controversies, which will tend to increase our present difficulties. But what is meant by this objection? To reveal secrets, or to repeat matters that have been well settled between persons or parties, is forbidden, and its effects are very pernicious; but what is that to a history of public facts, and an examination of the principles and conduct both of oppressors and of the oppressed?" [2]

Being upon our guard, then, against this writer's prepossession, we may note that his method of procedure anticipates every feature of modern historic research: a tireless hunt for the original documents, a tireless study of them, a reference of every problem to them, the use in essential particulars of their very words, finally, a perception of the worthlessness of every historic affirmation that stands without its source definitely given. "Let us," says he, "hear those fathers tell their own story." [3] In order to do this, he makes no difficulty of journeys far and near; of turning

[1] "A History of New England," i. Pref. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. 1–2.

over patiently the manuscript records of churches, towns, colonies, States; of writing out with his own hand the exact language of the fathers. "Here, therefore," he is able to say, at last, "are a great number of particulars with good vouchers to support them."[1]

The result of all this toil is, indeed, a book without classic symmetry or charm, with no amenities of style, without the calm grandeur of disinterestedness, yet thorough and genuine in all its parts, honest in purpose, every page of it bearing the stamp of "simplicity, perspicuity, integrity, and manliness,"[2] the whole quite needful to be reckoned with by any one who would grasp the significance of the history of New England for its first two centuries.

VI.

Reaching the line which, in these historical essays, divides Colonial themes from those of the Revolution, we confront a writer who, in his capacity as historian, not only towers above all his contemporaries, but deals with themes which are both Colonial and Revolutionary. This writer is the man so famous and so hated in his day as a Loyalist statesman and magistrate, Thomas Hutchinson, the last civilian who served as governor of Massachusetts under appointment of the king.

A recent and a very competent American critic[3] has characterized the three volumes of Thomas Hutchinson's "History of Massachusetts Bay" and the one volume of his "Collection of Original Papers" as "the four most precious books" touching that portion of American history. Indeed, that in these volumes Hutchinson has illustrated the fundamental virtues of an historian, and that he deserves to be ranked as, upon the whole, the ablest historical writer produced in America prior to the nineteenth century, are conclusions as to which there is now substantial agree-

[1] "A History of New England," i. Pref.

[2] Hovey, "A Memoir . . . of Isaac Backus," 32.

[3] William Frederick Poole, in "The Dial," vol. v, number 51.

ment among scholars. James Savage called him "the most diligent and exact of all writers of colonial history, since Winthrop."[1] Charles Francis Adams, the elder, put many eulogies into few words when he described Hutchinson as an historian who "is seldom inaccurate."[2] Charles Deane, who regarded Hutchinson's historical labors as of "the highest value," partly accounted for their worth by the remark, that "Hutchinson's mind was eminently a judicial one," and that "candor, moderation, and a desire for truth, appear to have guided his pen."[3] William Frederick Poole, after pointing out that Hutchinson "had opportunities of access to original papers such as no person now possesses," declared that he had also made an adequate use of his unrivaled opportunities:—"He had the tastes, the capacity for close application and research, the judicial understanding, and the freedom from prejudice and partisanship, which characterize the genuine historian. His style, if not always elegant, is clear and simple, and singularly free from that sensational and rhetorical method of statement which is the bane of much of the historical writing of the present day."[4] It is far from being a reason for abating anything from the glory due to such achievements in historical literature, that they were but the recreation and by-play of a most laborious man-of-affairs, who, as politician, legislator, and magistrate, was from manhood to old age in the thick of nearly all important business pertaining to the interests of his country; who, prior to 1765, was incomparably the most popular and the most influential statesman in New England; and who, from the year of the Stamp Act until that of his own death in London fifteen years afterward, was the most powerful American statesman in the ranks of the Loyalist party.

In writing the early history of Massachusetts, Thomas

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[1] John Winthrop, "The History of New England," with Notes by James Savage, i. 296, note.

[2] "The Works of John Adams," i. 103.

[3] "Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc.," iii. 147.

[4] "The N. E. Hist. and Gen. Register," xxiv. 381–382.

Hutchinson was in effect writing the history of his own ancestors, some of whom had been eminent, some of whom had been notorious, in the colony almost from the year of its foundation He was born in Boston in 1711. Immediately upon his graduation at Harvard College in 1727, he entered the counting-house of his father, who was a prosperous merchant. Clear-headed, thorough, methodical, indefatigable, he at once developed a high capacity for business, both commercial and political. In 1737, he was chosen a selectman for the town of Boston, and a month or two later, one of its representatives in the colonial legislature. The burning question in politics at that time was public finance, —a subject on which Thomas Hutchinson was, probably, the greatest master produced in America prior to Robert Morris, Pelatiah Webster, and Alexander Hamilton. Thirty-five years before the Declaration of Independence, there was in Massachusetts a large and vociferous party resolved upon various schemes for fiat money and for wild-cat banking. Against all these schemes, this young politician set himself with fearless and most intelligent opposition,—thus shewing at the beginning of his long political career that trait of intellectual and moral independence which he continued to exercise to the very end of it. From the age of twenty-six when he was elected to his first office, until the age of sixty-three when he resigned his last one, he was kept constantly and conspicuously in the public service, either as selectman, member of the house of representatives, speaker of the house, member of the council, commissioner to the general congress at Albany in 1754, commissioner on many negotiations with the Indians, judge of probate, justice of the common-pleas, chief-justice, lieutenant-governor, and finally governor. Before the outbreak of the great controversy between the colonies and the British government, no other man in America had, to so high a degree as Hutchinson, the confidence both of the British government on the one hand, and of his own countrymen on the other. Had his advice been taken in that controversy by either of the two parties

who had so greatly confided in him, the war of the Revolution would have been averted.[1] His advice was twofold: first, that the British government should be content with the assertion of the constiutional principle of the supremacy of parliament, and forbear from exercising it in the article of American taxation; and, secondly, that the Americans should forbear from denying the constitutional principle of the supremacy of parliament, in view of the assurance that, upon their doing so, that principle should never be exercised in any form of colonial taxation. To these two ideas of public policy and of public righteousness, Thomas Hutchinson, as is now known, remained faithful unto death,—in his fidelity to them sacrificing, on the one hand, popularity, home, fortune, and the privilege of burial by the side of his loved ones, and, on the other hand, some portion even of his personal favor with the king. Thus, in his championship of a noble, even if baffled, scheme for the liberty and unity of the English-speaking race, this statesman of Massachusetts takes his stand, in the history of the American Revolution, by the side of Joseph Galloway of Pennsylvania, as a typical American Loyalist.

VII.

While the writing of history was for Hutchinson but the recreation and by-play of a life immersed in outward busi-

[1] It may help the modern reader to some appreciation of the pre-Revolutionary standing of Thomas Hutchinson to read an entry made by John Adams in his diary for March 17, 1766—the very month of the repeal of the Stamp Act—wherein, with his usual orotundity of statement, he mentions the trophies of this New England Miltiades by which the ambitious young lawyer could not sleep: "Has not his merit been sounded very high, by his countrymen, for twenty years? Have not his countrymen loved, admired, revered, rewarded, nay, almost adored him? Have not ninety-nine in a hundred of them really thought him the greatest and best man in America? . . . Nay, have not the affection and admiration of his countrymen arisen so high as often to style him the greatest and best man in the world?" "The Works of John Adams," ii. 189–190. Six years afterward, John Adams wrote in his diary that he and his kinsman, Samuel Adams, had always "concurred in sentiment that the liberties of this country had more to fear from one man, the present Governor Hutchin-

ness, the study of history seems to have been a passion with him almost from his childhood. Speaking of himself in the third person, he once wrote in his diary:—"History was his favorite study; and when a boy, before he went to college, he chose rather to spend an evening in reading Morton's 'New England Memorial,' Church's 'History of the Indian War,' Dr. Mather's 'Lives of the New England Governors,' etc., than to be at play with boys in the street. And he had made some advances in the English History. The tragical account of King Charles's sufferings and death happening to fall into his hands, tho' it produced tears, he went through it with eagerness; and Baker's 'Chronicle,' and Fox's 'Martyrology,' being among his father's books, afforded him much entertainment."[1] Among the papers left by Hutchinson at his death, was found this additional note of self-description:—"In the course of my education, I found no part of science a more pleasing study than history, and no part of the history of any country more useful than that of its government and laws. The history of Great Britain and of its dominions was of all others the most delightful to me; and a thorough knowledge of the nature and constitution of the supreme and of the subordinate governments thereof I considered as what would be peculiarly beneficial to me in the line of life upon which I was entering; and the public employments to which I was early called, and sustained for near thirty years together, gave me many advantages for the acquisition of this knowledge."[2] It should be added that, even then, Hutchinson had the scientific idea of the importance of primary documents. Through his great eminence in the community, and through his ceaseless zeal in the collection of such documents, he was enabled in

son, than from any other man, nay, than from all other men in the world. This sentiment was founded in their knowledge of his character, his unbounded ambition, and his unbounded popularity." Ibid. 295.

[1] "The Diary and Letters of His Excelleney Thomas Hutchinson, Esq." Edited by his great-grandson, Peter Orlando Hutchinson, i. 47.

[2] Cited by Charles Deane in his admirable paper on "Hutchinson's Historical Publications." "Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc.," iii. 147.

the course of many years to bring together a multitude of manuscript materials of priceless value touching the history of New England.

With such materials at his command, and using with diligence those fragments of time which his unflagging energy enabled him to pluck from business and from sleep, he was ready, in July, 1764, amid the first mutterings of that political storm which was to play havoc with these peaceful studies and to shatter the hopes of his life-time, to send to the printer, in Boston, the first volume of "The History of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, from the First Settlement thereof in 1628, until . . . 1691."[1]

The great place in public life then held by the author of this book, the fulness of his learning, his ability, the fairness of his method in dealing with the subject, finally, the incomparable interest which that subject had for the people to whom it was addressed, all combined, even amid the ferocities and clamors of politics, to give to its publication very considerable eclat. In spite of the distractions of that angry and perilous period, the author at once set to work upon his second volume, which was to carry the history of Massachusetts down to the year 1750. In this noble task he had proceeded for a considerable time, and had brought the story as far on as to the year 1730, "when," as he afterward wrote, "a misfortune befell me which had like to have rendered my past labor of no effect and to have prevented me from proceeding any farther."[2] This misfortune, of course, was the riotous attack upon his house in Boston by a mob maddened by rum and by the false charge that Hutchinson had been in favor of the passage of the Stamp Act.

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[1] By an advertisement in the Boston "Evening Post," it appears to have been issued December 17, 1764. In the following year, it was reprinted in London, and that reprint was called "The Second Edition." By a typographical error, the final character in the intended date upon the title-page was left off, and thus the second edition purports to have been published in MDCCLX, four years before the first edition. My references are to this second edition.

[2] Part of the Preface to the second volume of his "History."

It was on the evening of Monday, the twenty-sixth of August, 1765, that the Lieutenant-Governor, according to a narrative written by some friend five days afterward, received warning, while he was at supper in his own house with his motherless children, "that the mob was coming to him. He immediately sent away his children, and determined to stay in the house himself; but, happily, his eldest daughter returned, and declared she would not stir from the house unless he went with her: by which means she got him away, which was undoubtedly the occasion of saving his life. For, as the mob had got into the house, with a most irresistible fury, they immediately looked about for him, to murder him, and even made diligent enquiry whither he was gone. They went to work with a rage scarce to be exemplified by the most savage people. Every thing moveable was destroyed in the most minute manner, except such things of value as were worth carrying off,—among which were near one thousand pounds sterling in specie, besides a great quantity of family plate, and so forth." "As for the house, which, from its structure and inside finishing, seemed to be from a design of Inigo Jones, or his successor, it appears that they were a long while resolved to level it to the ground. They worked three hours at the cupola before they could get it down, and they uncovered part of the roof; but I suppose that the thickness of the walls, which were of very fine brick-work adorned with Ionic pilasters worked into the wall, prevented their completing their purpose, though they worked at it till day-light. The next day, the streets were found scattered with money, plate, gold rings, and so forth, which had been dropt in carrying off." "But the loss to be most lamented is, that there was in one room, kept for that purpose, a large and valuable collection of manuscripts and original papers, which he had been gathering all his life-time, and to which all persons who had been in possession of valuable papers of a public kind, had been contributing, as to a public museum. As these related to the history and policy of the country, from the time of its settlement to the

present, and was the only collection of its kind, the loss to the public is great and irretrievable,—as it is to himself the loss of the papers of a family which had made a figure in this province for a hundred and thirty years." [1]

Among the treasures which thus lay scattered abroad in the wet and filthy streets for several hours of that night of barbarity, was his unfinished manuscript for the second volume of his History of Massachusetts; and though for several days afterward the historian quite despaired of recovering it, yet, through the help of his friend and neighbor, the Reverend Andrew Eliot, all but eight or ten sheets were rescued from destruction. Bespattered with rain and mud, stamped and torn by the hoofs of horses and of men, much of this recovered manuscript proved to be so far legible that it could be transcribed by the author, who was also able to supply the rest.[2] Accordingly, resuming his work, and carrying forward the story to the year 1750, he published his second volume in the early summer of the year 1767,—not far from the very day on which parliament, by the passage of the Townsend Act, perpetrated the ineffable folly of plunging the empire into such tumults as led to its disruption.[3]

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[1] These paragraphs are from a letter, probably by Governor Bernard, and dated August 31, 1765. It was printed, without signature, in the Appendix to the celebrated English pamphlet entitled "The Conduct of the Late Administration Examined." London: 1767, pages xlii–xlviii.

[2] The first sheets of this first draught of Hutchinson's second volume, which thus survived that horrid night, and which still bear the stains and bruises of the outrage put upon them, are now preserved in the library of the State of Massachusetts. Hutchinson himself had told us, in the Preface to that volume, that the copy sent to the press was a transcript made by himself from this first draught; but it remained for William Frederick Poole to make the interesting and valuable discovery that the copy from which the book was printed is not so good as that original draught: "Incidents and opinions contained in the earlier draught are changed, abridged, and sometimes omitted, in the later draught. In matters of fact, the earlier draught is often more precise and accurate than the printed text." "The N. E. Hist. and Gen. Reg.," xxiv. 381.

[3] "The Evening Post," of Boston, for July 13, 1767, advertises Hutchinson's second volume as "just published."

Notwithstanding the lurid and bitter incidents amid which it was written, the second volume of Hutchinson's History of Massachusetts, like the first one, has the tone of moderation and of equanimity suggestive of a philosopher abstracted from outward cares, and devoted to the disinterested discovery and exposition of the truth. Only in the Preface is there any allusion to the indignity from the fatal effects of which the historian and his History had so narrowly escaped. After narrating concisely the events which led to the temporary loss of his own manuscript, and to the permanent loss of other documents still more valuable, he contents himself with a single sentence of austere and not unrighteous indignation:—"I pray God to forgive the actors in, and advisers to, this most savage and inhuman injury; and I hope their posterity will read with pleasure and profit what has so narrowly escaped the outrage of their ancestors."

VIII.

From the time of the publication of the second installment of his work, sixty-one years were to elapse before the public should receive ocular evidence that the author had had the fortitude, amid the calamities which overwhelmed his later years, to go on with his historical labors, and to complete a third and final volume, telling the story of Massachusetts from the year 1750 until the year 1774—the year in which he laid down his office as governor, and departed for England.

He was summoned thither at his own desire, in order to report in person to the king and ministry the condition of affairs in America, and especially in his own province. Moreover, if we may accept the solemn and pathetic declarations now to be found scattered through the letters and diaries which he wrote in England, a nearer and a dearer purpose prompted him to ask permission to go there: it was that he might, by direct personal appeal, dissuade the government from persisting in its impolitic measures toward the

colonies, and might thus avert from his country the ineffable calamity of a fratricidal war—the nearness of which he could not fail to see.[1]

Of course, his mission to England was a failure. The quarrel had already gone too far; already upon both sides blood had become too hot; and, before very long, both at the levees of the king and at the audiences of the ministers, the somewhat dreary and monitory tales of this fumbling New England courtier fell upon impatient ears, until, indeed, they were quenched in the ultimate disaster of a royal snub.[2] In the meantime, no slight, no misfortune, could quench his love for his country, his longing to save it from misery, his longing to return to it and to lay his body where was buried that of the wife of his youth. "I am not able

[1] For his opposition to the parliamentary taxation of the colonies, and for his efforts to secure some mitigation of the Boston port bill and, in other ways, to soften ministerial measures and to prevent a resort to hostilities, the reader may find it of interest to turn to the following pages of the first volume of his "Diary and Letters":—70, 188, 189, 197, 203, 214, 217, 219, 220, 233, 261, 285–286, 375, 381, 500.

[2] Some sorrowful hints of all this are given by Hutchinson himself in his "Diary," as where he mentions, in a bewildered sort of way, the first time that the king passed him at a levee without speaking to him or looking at him. John Adams, who so roundly hated Hutchinson, and who, in 1785, went to London as American minister, seems to have used some of the leisure which the disdain of that court conferred upon him, in gathering up items of gossip touching the humiliations of Hutchinson's last years. "Fled in his old age," writes John Adams, of the last royal governor of Massachusetts, "from the detestation of a country where he had been beloved, esteemed, and admired, and applauded with exaggeration—in short, where he had been everything from his infancy—to a country where he was nothing; pinched by a pension, which, though ample in Boston, would barely keep a house in London; throwing round his baleful eyes on the exiled companions of his folly; hearing daily of the slaughter of his countrymen and conflagration of their cities; abhorred by the greatest men and soundest part of the nation, and neglected, if not despised by the rest, hardened as had been my heart against him, I assure you I was melted at the accounts I heard of his condition. Lord Townsend told me that he put an end to his own life. Though I did not believe this, I know he was ridiculed by the courtiers. They laughed at his manners at the levee, at his perpetual quotation of his brother Foster, searching his pockets for letters to read to the king, and the king turning away from him with his head up, etc." "Works," x. 261–262.

to subdue a natural attachment to the very soil and air, as well as to the people, of New England." [1] "The prospect is so gloomy that I am sometimes tempted to endeavor to forget that I am an American, and to turn my views to a provision for what remains of life in England; but the passion for my native country returns." [2] "People in high and low life agree in advising me to settle in England; but I cannot give up the hopes of laying my bones in New England, and hitherto I consider myself as only upon an excursion from home." [3] "For myself, I have been offered the fulfillment of every promise or assurance given me before I left America; but I had no aim at honors or titles, and would now be content to give up all claim to them, and to all emoluments whatsoever, and to spend the remainder of life in obscurity, if upon those terms I could purchase the peace and prosperity of my country." [4] "I assure you I had rather die in a little country farm house in New England, than in the best nobleman's seat in Old England." [5] "New England is wrote upon my heart in as strong characters as Calais was upon Queen Mary's." [6]

Borne down with sorrow, amazed and horror-stricken at the fury of the storm that was overturning his most prudent calculations, and was sweeping him and his party from all their moorings out into an unknown sea, and, for them and for all men, was changing the very face of the world, he found some solace in resuming in England the historical task which he had left unfinished. In his diary for the twenty-second of October, 1778, its completion is recorded in this modest note:—"I finished the revisal of my History, to the end of my Administration, and laid it by." [7] Laid by certainly it was, so far as concerned men's knowledge or their charitable speeches, if not to foreign nations, at least to the next ages; and not until the year 1828, was it permitted to come forth to the light of day, and then, largely, through the magnanimous intervention of a group of noble-minded American

[1] "Diary and Letters," of Hutchinson, i. 128. [2] Ibid. 215.
[3] Ibid. 231. [4] Ibid. 263. [5] Ibid. 356. [6] Ibid. 283. [7] Ibid. ii. 218.

scholars in the very city which, in his later life-time, would not have permitted his return to it.[1]

IX.

A great historian, Hutchinson certainly was not, and, under the most favorable outward conditions, could not have been. He had the fundamental virtues of a great historian —love of truth, love of justice, diligence, the ability to master details and to narrate them with accuracy. Even in the exercise of these fundamental virtues, however, no historian in Hutchinson's circumstances could fail to be hampered by the enormous preoccupations of official business, or to have his judgment warped and colored by the prepossessions of his own political career. While Hutchinson was, indeed, a miracle of industry, it was only a small part of his industry that he was free to devote to historical research. However sincere may have been his purpose to tell the truth and to be fair to all, the literary product of such research was inevitably weakened, as can now be abundantly shewn, by many serious oversights and by many glaring misrepresentations, apparently through his failure to make a thorough use of important sources of information then accessible to him, such as colonial pamphlets, colonial newspapers, the manuscripts of his own ancestors and of the Mathers, and especially the general court records of the province in which he played so great a part. As to the rarer intellectual and spiritual endowments of a great historian,—breadth of vision, breadth of sympathy, the historic imagination, and the power of style,—these Hutchinson

[1] The third volume of Hutchinson's History, preserved, indeed, but for a time almost forgotten, by his descendants in England, was issued in London, in 1828, by John Murray, who was induced to undertake so unpromising an enterprise by the liberality of the president of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the president of Harvard College, the governor of Massachusetts, and Mr. James Savage. It was chiefly through the historical zeal and the persistence of the gentleman last named, that success was given to the long negotiations with the English Hutchinsons and their London publisher. The story of this is briefly told by Charles Deane in "Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc.," iii. 144–147.

almost entirely lacked. That he had not the gift of historical divination, the vision and the faculty divine to see the inward meaning of men and of events, and to express that meaning in gracious, noble, and fascinating speech—Hutchinson was himself partly conscious. "I am sensible," he says, with his usual modesty, respecting the first volume of his History, "that whoever appears in print should be able to dispose his matter in such order, and clothe it with such style and language, as shall not only inform but delight the reader. Therefore, I would willingly have delivered over everything I have collected to a person of genius for such a work. But seeing no prospect of its being done by any other, I engaged in it myself, being very loth that what had cost me some pains to bring together, should be again scattered and utterly lost." [1]

His first volume seems to have been written under a consciousness that his subject was provincial, and even of a local interest altogether circumscribed. In the second volume, one perceives a more cheery and confident tone, due, probably, to the prompt recognition which his labors had then received not only in Massachusetts but in England. In the third volume, are to be observed signs of increasing ease in composition, a more flowing and copious style, not a few felicities of expression.

That, in all these volumes, he intended to tell the truth, and to practice fairness, is also plain: to say that he did not entirely succeed, is to say that he was human. His purpose to be fair in his handling of all controversies of which he had to take account, is well stated by himself with reference to a single one of them:—"I am apprehensive some of my readers will be apt to doubt the impartiality of the relation. . . . I am not sensible of having omitted any material fact, nor have I designedly given a varnish to the actions of one party, or high coloring to those of the other. . . . I profess to give a true relation of facts. I see no difference between publishing false facts for truths, and omitting any

[1] Preface to the first volume.

which are material for the forming a just conception of the rest."[1] A striking instance of his judicial tone is to be noted in the story, given by him in his first volume, of the career of his ancestress, Mistress Anne Hutchinson. Indeed, many of the first readers of that volume thought that, in many particulars, he had carried his impartiality too far: they accused him of coldness of heart in giving so hard, dry, and unfeeling a narrative of the Indian wars,—especially of the sufferings of his own countrymen, even of his own kindred, at the hands of the savages.[2] In his second volume, the whole of which was written after the beginning of his own unpopularity, and a part of it even after the looting and demolition of his house, there is a tinge of still deeper political conservatism, and of a sad, if not cynical, conviction that in New England a public servant might have to choose between popularity and fidelity to his own sense of right.[3] Of course, the supreme test of historical fairness was reached when he came to the writing of his third volume,—which was, in fact, the history not only of his contemporaries but of himself, and of himself in deep and angry disagreement with many of them. It is much to his praise to say that, throughout this third volume, the prevailing tone is calm, moderate, just, with only occasional efforts at pleading his own cause, with only occasional flickers of personal or political enmity. Unquestionably, in his descriptions of such antagonists of his as Hancock, Bowdoin, Cushing, the Adamses, the Otises, he does make statements which imply in them weaknesses and faults—in some instances, faults of a very serious nature. Even in these instances, the historian's censures of them may perhaps be called gentle, even sweet, by comparison with the unrestrained and blasting censures of him, which, as he well knew, several of these men were accustomed publicly to ex-

[1] "History," etc., ii. 288.

[2] It will be remembered that Anne Hutchinson and many of her family were cruelly massacred by the Indians.

[3] For example, volume ii. 196, 226, 231.

press. Moreover, with the exception of the charge of pecuniary dishonor against Samuel Adams—wherein the historian put upon record what he and many of his contemporaries believed to be true—it is not now entirely clear that his estimates of his principal antagonists differ very much from the estimates of them now held by disinterested students of that age.

A profound writer upon the history of New England [1] has expressed the opinion that, as an historian, Hutchinson was unfitted for the work he undertook, either because he had no heart, or because he had no heart for his country,—being out of sympathy with the strongest and best currents of the life of its people. That Hutchinson had a heart—a tender and a true one—and that he had a heart even for his own country, has now been placed beyond doubt by the publication of his private papers. Moreover, in culture, in opinion, in religious faith, in conduct, he was himself a representative New England Puritan. Furthermore, there was no element of civic greatness or felicity which he did not covet for his countrymen, and strive to procure. Even with their fundamental conception as to the proper form for their own political rights, he was in accord,—declaring that our ancestors "left their native country with the strongest assurances that they and their posterity should enjoy the privileges of free natural-born English subjects," and praying that those privileges might "be preserved inviolate to the latest posterity." [2] Even in their magnificent dream of a great American empire, he shared,—giving it as one reason, in fact, for preserving the records of "the rise and progress of the several colonies," that those colonies were destined, "in a few generations," to have great historic importance by becoming constituent parts of "a mighty empire." [3] The issue upon which, at last, this most popular of New England men broke with many of his contempo-

[1] J. G. Palfrey, in "3 Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc.", ix. 173–174.

[2] Hutchinson, "History," etc., i. Preface iv.

[3] Hutchinson, "Original Papers," etc., Preface i.

raries, and fell out of line with what finally proved to be the course of events, was an issue touching the method of realizing this magnificent dream. Hutchinson believed that it could be realized, and that it ought to be realized, by the process of a natural and legal development, in full peace and amity with the mother land—in short, by evolution. They believed, on the other hand, that such process would be either too doubtful or too slow; that their magnificent dream could best be realized by a sudden attack upon their constitutional environment, by a swift and violent rupture of legal and traditionary ties—in short, by revolution. Accordingly, it is only in the third volume of his History that Hutchinson can truly be said to be out of sympathy with the dominating currents of the life of his countrymen. Nevertheless, for that period also, what he thus wrote, even if it breathes the tone of a baffled and an alienated man, is of high value as the testimony of one who took a great part in the events which he endeavors to narrate.

No one should approach the reading of Hutchinson's "History of Massachusetts Bay" with the expectation of finding in it either brilliant writing or an entertaining story. From beginning to end, there are few passages that can be called even salient—but almost everywhere an even flow of statesmanlike narrative; severe in form; rather dull, probably, to all who have not the preparation of a previous interest in the matters discussed; but always pertinent, vigorous, and full of pith. Notwithstanding Hutchinson's modest opinion of his own ability in the drawing of historical portraits, it is probable that in such portraits of distinguished characters, both among his contemporaries and among his predecessors, the general reader will be likely to find himself the most interested. One of these portraits is that of Joseph Dudley, governor of Massachusetts, by royal appointment, from 1702 to 1715. Perhaps Hutchinson may have wrought at this sketch with especial care, as being conscious that in the character and in the earlier career of Governor Dudley were some features of resemblance to his own,

even as he may also have believed that the later triumphs of his predecessor in office, were but a prophecy of those that then awaited him:—"No New England man had passed through more scenes of busy life than Mr. Dudley. His friends intended otherwise. He was educated for the ministry, and if various dignities had been known in the New England churches, possibly he had lived and died a clergyman; but without this, nothing could be more dissonant from his genius. He soon turned his thoughts to civil affairs; was first a deputy or representative of the town of Roxbury; then an assistant; then agent for the colony in England, where he laid a foundation for a commission, soon after, appointing him president of the council of Massachusetts Bay only, but, under Andros, for all New England. Upon the Revolution, for a short time, he was sunk in disgrace, but soon emerged. He appeared, first, in the character of chief justice at New York; then, returning to England, became lieutenant-governor of the Isle of Wight and member of parliament for Newtown, both which places he willingly resigned for the chief command in his own country. Ambition was the ruling passion; and perhaps, like Cæsar, he had rather be the first man in New England than the second in Old. Few men have been pursued by their enemies with greater virulence, and few have been supported by their friends with greater zeal. . . . Some of his good qualities were so conspicuous, that his enemies could not avoid acknowledging them. He applied himself with the greatest diligence to the business of his station. The affairs of the war and other parts of his administration were conducted with good judgment. In economy he excelled, both in public and private life. He supported the dignity of a governor without the reproach of parsimony, and yet, from the moderate emoluments of his post, made an addition to his paternal estate. The visible increase of his substance made some incredible reports of gross bribery and corruption to be very easily believed; but, in times when party spirit prevails, what will not a governor's enemies

believe, however injurious and absurd ? . . . His cringing to Randolph, when in his heart he despised him, was a spot in his character; and his secret insinuations, to the disadvantage of his country, was a greater,—both being for the sake of recommending himself to court favor. I think it is no more than justice to his character to allow, that he had as many virtues as can consist with so great a thirst for honor and power." [1]

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[1] Hutchinson, "History of Massachusetts Bay," ii. 213–214. Besides the two editions already mentioned of the first two volumes of this work, there was published in 1795 a third edition, "With Additional Notes and Corrections," the first volume having been printed at Salem and the second at Boston. The mechanical execution of this edition is inferior; while the notes are few and meagre, and the so-called corrections unimportant. For this edition of the first two volumes, and for the only edition of the third volume, was issued in New York, in 1879, an "Index to Persons and Places mentioned in Hutchinson's Massachusetts . . . made by J. Wingate Thornton, Historiographer, and somewhat corrected by Charles L. Woodward, Book Peddler." For other writings of Hutchinson, should be mentioned a pamphlet on the paper-money dispute, published in 1736 ("Diary and Letters," i. 53), and now unknown; "The Case of the Provinces of Massachusetts Bay and New York, respecting the Boundary Line between the two Provinces," Boston, 1764—probably the same production as that mentioned by William Allen ("Am. Biog. Dict.," 462) as "a brief state of the claim of the colonies, etc."; "The Letters of Governor Hutchinson," written in 1768 and 1769 to his friend Thomas Whately, M.P., and surreptitiously procured by Franklin, and printed in Boston in 1773 and in London in 1774; many of Hutchinson's official speeches and other papers as lieutenant-governor and as governor of Massachusetts, republished in the collection of state-papers edited by Alden Bradford, Boston, 1818; many letters of his printed in "Massachusetts Archives," xxvi.; finally "Strictures upon the Declaration of the Congress at Philadelphia: In a Letter to a Noble Lord, etc." London, 1776. There are also many important manuscript letters, and other unpublished papers of Hutchinson, to be found in the library of the State of Massachusetts, and in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Since this chapter was written, Professor James Kendall Hosmer has published an extended biography of Hutchinson, based upon a direct study of all the materials left by Hutchinson, and furnishing an example of historic fair-mindedness in the treatment of a subject hitherto commonly swamped in mere partisanship. Whoever would have before him all that can now be urged against Hutchinson, both as an historian and as a statesman, by a scholar minutely acquainted with the sources of Massachusetts history, may be fully gratified by reading the trenchant criticism on Dr. Hosmer's book, by Abner C. Goodell, Jr., in "The American Historical Review," for October, 1896, pp. 163–170.

X.

Somewhere in the debatable land between history, fiction, and burlesque, there wanders a notorious book, first published anonymously in London in 1781, and entitled "A General History of Connecticut, from its first Settlement under George Fenwick, Esq. to its latest Period of Amity with Great Britain; including a Description of the Country, and many curious and interesting Anecdotes. To which is added an Appendix, wherein new and the true Sources of the present Rebellion in America are pointed out, together with the particular Part taken in it by the People of Connecticut in its Promotion. By a Gentleman of the Province."[1]

Though the authorship of this book was never acknowledged by the man who wrote it, there is no doubt that it was the work of Samuel Peters, an Anglican clergyman and a Loyalist, a man of commanding personal presence, uncommon intellectual resources, powerful will, and ill-balanced character. He was born in Hebron, Connecticut, in 1735; was graduated at Yale College in 1757; and having soon after received ordination in England, he became minister of the Episcopal parish in his native town, in which capacity he there remained from about the year 1760 until 1774. That he labored all his life under a certain perturbation of those faculties which are meant to confer upon a man good sense, is partly shewn by the fact, mentioned by his own nephew, that this missionary of a Church planted among a people already prejudiced against it, "aped the style of an English nobleman, built his house in a forest, kept his coach,

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[1] Second edition, London: 1782. Of the first London edition an American reprint was issued in New Haven in 1829,—an ill-looking book, on flimsy paper, with eight melancholy "engravings" on wood. A second American reprint of the first London edition was published in excellent form in New York, in 1877, edited by Samuel Jarvis McCormick, a great-grandson of Samuel Peters. A list of Peters's numerous published writings is given by Franklin Bowditch Dexter, in his "Yale Biographies," ii., 485-487,—a work of great learning, precision, and fairness, which has appeared since my account of Peters was written.

and looked with some degree of scorn upon republicans."[1] Very naturally, he opposed with frank and bitter aggressiveness the Revolutionary politics then rampant among his neighbors; and having in 1774 drawn upon himself the painful attentions of the "Sons of Liberty," he fled in great wrath from the town and the colony. For a few weeks thereafter, he found refuge in Boston, whence he sailed for England in October, 1774. There he abode until his return to America in 1805. During the five or six years immediately following his arrival in England, he seems to have had congenial employment in composing his "General History of Connecticut," as a means apparently of wreaking an undying vengeance upon the sober little commonwealth in which he was born and from which he had been thus ignominiously cast out. The result of this long labor of hate, was a production, calling itself historical, which was characterized by a contemporary English journal[2] as having "so many marks of party spleen and idle credulity" as to be "altogether unworthy of the public attention."

In spite, however, of such censure both then and since then, this alleged "History" has had, now for more than a hundred years, not only a vast amount of public attention, but very considerable success in a form that seems to have been dear to its author's heart—that of spreading through the English-speaking world a multitude of ludicrous impressions to the dishonor of the people of whom it treats. It cannot be denied that for such a service, it was most admirably framed; since its grotesque fabrications in disparagement of a community of Puritan dissenters seem to have proved a convenient quarry for ready-made calumnies upon that sort of people there and elsewhere, and even, in the opinion of some on-lookers, to have supplied "many respectable and reverend authors with facilities for breaking the

[1] John S. Peters, sometime governor of Connecticut, in Sprague, "Annals," etc., v. 194.

[2] "The Monthly Review," cited in J. H. Trumbull, "The True Blue Laws," etc., 33–34.

ninth commandment without incurring personal responsibility." [1]

Respecting this singular book, it is perhaps possible to suggest but one theory which can relieve its author of a certain term of reproach never justly applied to an honest man. Did he not write his so-called "History" in a spirit of mere irony and burlesque? Have we not here another of those cases of literary misinterpretation, wherein what was meant for jest has been taken in earnest? A glance through the preface, still more, a glance through the text, should be enough to disperse such a supposition. After even so slight an inspection, probably no disinterested and competent critic can doubt that Peters intended his narrative to be accepted by the world as authentic history. But authentic history it is not. What then? For a political satire, one can feel respect—a respect even proportioned to the keenness and fierceness of its wit. An historical romance, also, however grotesque, however incredible, one may be able to read with some amusement, and at any rate without necessary moral disapproval. But a narrative obviously intended to be taken by its readers as a truthful and faithful record of facts, which yet is saturated by exaggerations and perversions of those facts, is interfused and overlaid by fictions, —many of them, likewise, of a nature to bring contempt and obloquy upon the people thus dealt with,—this is such a monstrosity in literature as literature has no place nor name for.

There once lived in Connecticut another professed historian of that commonwealth—but a man of extreme truthfulness and precision of statement—Benjamin Trumbull [2] by name, born in the same town with Samuel Peters, and in the same year, a fellow-student, likewise, with Peters in the same college, and his acquaintance and correspondent

[1] J. Hammond Trumbull, "The True Blue Laws," etc., 34, where may be seen some evidence in justification of the above remark.

[2] Author of "A Complete History of Connecticut, Civil and Ecclesiastical," etc. Two volumes. New Haven: 1818.

during a long life. A few words of quiet testimony once uttered by Trumbull may help us to assign Samuel Peters and his book to the category to which they both belong: "Of all men with whom I have ever been acquainted, I have thought Dr. Peters the least to be depended upon as to any matter of fact."[1] Moreover, much of what otherwise remains to us in the form of book,[2] or letter, or anecdote, either from Peters or about him, has the effect of adding strength to the conclusion that he was himself a victim of his own almost unrivaled gift for confounding the things he had actually known, with the things he had merely imagined. His appears to have been one of those exceedingly creative minds, which are unable to give an account of the simplest facts, without adding to them great and perhaps unconscious embellishments of fancy. Indeed, his capacity for such embellishments may be said to have had a brilliance that was even hectic and morbid. For an ordinary person afflicted in this way, there exists among healthy people of the Anglo-Saxon race a single descriptive word which has the merit of cogent brevity and explicitness. Probably, however, for an extraordinary person, like Samuel Peters, some may think it needful to resort to a more erudite and a more courteous description. Certainly, as a narrator of facts, he seems to have had so marvelous an alacrity for those which never had any existence, as to have won for himself the honor of being described not as a liar, but as a victim of that magnificent ailment now known as pseudomania.[3]

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[1] Transposed from the form of sentence as given by J. Hammond Trumbull, in "The Rev. Samuel Peters, His Defenders and Apologists," 26.

[2] For example, his "History of the Rev. Hugh Peters, A.M.," New York, 1807,—a work wholly without historical character: loose and reckless in assertion, violent in temper, flabby in style, the product of a mind which one instinctively feels to have been not careful for precision, not orderly and well-poised, not thoroughly sane.

[3] The reader who may care to examine all that can be said, in full detail, upon both sides of the controversy respecting Samuel Peters, is referred, first of all, to the book itself, Peters's "General History of Connecticut"; then to

XI.

So soon as the Revolutionary conflict had reached its military stage, there began to be manifest among us a consciousness of its unusual significance, and the need of making and keeping records of it. We may not entirely disregard the tokens of this historic purpose even in a form so humble and so crude as that of diaries and other off-hand records of passing events. Especially noteworthy are some of the military journals which have survived from those times.

James Thacher, who, at the outbreak of hostilities, was a student of medicine at Barnstable, Massachusetts, entered the medical service of the army on the fifteenth of July, 1775, and continued in that service until the first of January, 1783,—accompanying the army upon nearly all of its most celebrated movements, and making the acquaintance of nearly all of its most celebrated men. Some sort of journal of this very interesting life of his, he seems to have kept; and had he chosen, at any time afterward, to publish

"The True Blue Laws of Connecticut and New Haven," etc., by J. Hammond Trumbull, Hartford, 1876; to "The Churchman" for March 24, 1877, containing an article on "Virginia and Civil Liberty," by Thomas W. Coit; to "The Churchman" for May 26, and June 2, 1877, containing articles on "Dr. Samuel Peters," by his great-grandson, Samuel Jarvis Mc Cormick; to "The Churchman" for August 11, and September 1, 1877, containing articles in review of Trumbull's book on "The True Blue Laws of Connecticut and New Haven," etc.; to the reprint of Peters's "General History of Connecticut," edited, with additions to the Appendix, etc., by Samuel Jarvis Mc Cormick, New York, 1877; and to J. Hammond Trumbull's rejoinder to these criticisms, entitled "The Rev. Samuel Peters, His Defenders and Apologists," Hartford, 1877. Upon the whole, the most dispassionate and the fairest account of Peters, and also the saddest one, is the straightforward documentary sketch written by his kinsman, the late Governor John S. Peters, of Hebron, Connecticut, to be found in Sprague, "Annals," etc., v. 191–200. The judgment respecting Peters, which I have expressed above, is based almost entirely upon a study of the evidence furnished by that sketch and by the printed writings of Peters. To this judgment I have come reluctantly, after three deliberate sieges of investigation separated from one another by intervals of several years, and in spite of my private sympathy with the ecclesiastical position of the man himself, of my appreciation of his many kindly and attractive qualities, and of my desire to discharge a judicial duty without giving pain to living persons, particularly, as in the present case, to living persons of the highest worth.

that journal just as it stood, in all its primitive crudity, with every break, blunder, pen-slip, raggedness of phrase, and other ear-mark of the original situation sticking to it and authenticating it, its value to all readers could not have been small. Unfortunately, however, he was not content with so humble a ministration to the cravings of posterity for Revolutionary memories. He was a facile and a somewhat effusive writer; and in preparing for the press his memoranda, which he published in 1823 under the title of "A Military Journal during the American Revolutionary War," he seems to have recomposed and expanded the original record, to have removed from it every trace of brevity, haste, perturbation, surprise, or uncertainty, to have diluted and rounded out all his rough jottings into flowing and conventional literary periods, and to have intermingled with his original materials a mass of later information, inference, reminiscence, or rhapsody,—leaving the reader in total darkness as to what portion of the journal was written during the Revolutionary War, and what forty years afterward, and, as a consequence, robbing his book of much of the charm and of the trustworthiness which would have attached to the sort of work which it professes to be—but is not.

A valid specimen of the military diary is "A Journal of Occurrences"[1] as kept by Major Return Jonathan Meigs of Connecticut, an officer in the heroic little army which marched in 1775, under the command of Benedict Arnold, through the wilderness of Maine for the invasion of Canada. Without the waste of a word, without a boast or a whine, it gives the essential facts appertaining to that most gritty, painful, and disastrous job,—the stark details of labor, suffering, courage, cowardice, in the long march, the arrival upon the river bank opposite Quebec, the crossing, the ascent to the Heights of Abraham, the attack, the failure.

[1] I found at the library of Harvard College a very old copy of this "Journal," printed without place or date of publication. It is said to have first appeared in the "American Remembrancer" in 1776. It was republished in New York in 1876, with an introduction and notes by Charles Ira Bushnell.

An able soldier's story of an able soldier's great achievement under conditions of the utmost hardship and hazard, is the sketch of his "Campaign in the Illinois in 1778–1779,"[1] by George Rogers Clark: a bit of writing, this, by a swordman's pen amusingly authenticated in its disdain of such rubbish as orthography and syntax; a straight-forward narrative full of action, magnanimous emotion, and graphic power, and of imperishable interest, likewise, as a record of the way in which the young republic got its foot well planted on the broad lands of the northwest, holding it there thenceforward as against all comers, whether Spaniard, Frenchman, or Briton.

Without being spoiled by any effort at elaborateness, yet shewing the facility and neatness of a practised writer, is the "Journal of Tench Tilghman," while acting as secretary to the commissioners appointed by Congress to treat with the Six Nations at German Flats, in the summer of 1775; also, his "Diary of the Siege of Yorktown."[2]

Another genuine example of the military diary is "The Journal of Lieutenant William Feltman,"[3] from May, 1781, to April, 1782, embracing memoranda relating to the siege of Yorktown and the Southern Campaign.

XII.

A notable example of genuine work in the writing of some portion of the history of the Revolution, by a contemporary witness of its scenes, was occasioned by the first return of the anniversary of the slaughter at Lexington, namely, "A Brief Narrative of the Principal Transactions of That Day," —a clear, vivid, thrilling story as told by Jonas Clark, and by him added to a sermon[4] which he preached in Lexington Church on the nineteenth of April, 1776.

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[1] Published as "Number Three," in the "Ohio Valley Historical Series," Cincinnati: 1869.

[2] This "Diary" with the earlier "Journal" was first published in the Appendix to "Memoir of Tench Tilghman," Albany, 1876.

[3] First published, Philadelphia, 1853.

[4] Published in Boston, 1777; republished in the same place, in folio, with

David Ramsay, of Charleston, South Carolina, an eminent actor in the Revolution, began to qualify himself to be its historian by collecting documentary materials therefor, which, however, he appears not to have put to any literary use until after the close of this period.

A fellow-townsman of Ramsay's, William Henry Drayton, a member of the Continental Congress from South Carolina, had, also, formed the project of writing the history of the American Revolution. Upon his death at Philadelphia in September, 1779, there was found among his papers in that city a number of manuscripts shewing that he had already made considerable progress in the work. On the ground, however, that these manuscripts contained important secrets of state, they were at once destroyed. Luckily, Drayton had left at home two volumes written prior to his residence in Philadelphia, and embodying a narrative of events in the southern colonies, between the latter part of 1773 and the latter part of 1776. These volumes, having thus escaped the doom which had befallen his papers in Philadelphia, were subsequently used by his son, John Drayton, as the basis for a work published in Charleston in 1821, entitled "Memoirs of the American Revolution."[1]

XIII.

Another contemporary of the American Revolution who had a keen perception of its value as a subject for historical treatment, was Mercy Warren, a woman distinguished in those times by the vigor of her intelligence, her wide reading, her wit, her social charm, her high-spirited bearing amid the agitations and dangers upon which her life was cast. She was born in Barnstable, Massachusetts, in 1728. Being the daughter of James Otis, colonial jurist and poli-

illustrations, in 1875, in connection with the centennial commemoration of that epoch-making event. A delightful sketch of Jonas Clark, written by William Ware, is in Sprague, "Annals," etc., i. 514–519.

[1] The name of the younger Drayton alone is allowed to appear on the title-page—a manifestation of almost incredible vanity and selfishness on his part.

tician, sister of James Otis, Revolutionary orator, and wife of James Warren, able and trusted leader in the most aggressive measures of the Revolution, it may be said of her that, from childhood to old age, she had been accustomed to see at her own fireside the boldest, the most accomplished, the most sagacious of the political and military chieftains of America, to hear their talk, and to participate in it. She was admired and confided in by John Adams, Washington, Jefferson; with these and other men eminent in the affairs of her country, both at home and abroad, she long corresponded on terms of confidence; and as she was "stimulated to observation by a mind that had not yielded to the assertion, that all political attentions lay out of the road of female life,"[1] she became an expert in the public transactions of the world in her day, and a penetrating judge of the characters of the men who had a principal share in them.

Upon the development of the American Revolution, she resolved, since she could not be an actor in it, that she would be a delineator of it: "At a period when every manly arm was occupied, and every trait of talent or activity engaged, either in the cabinet or the field, . . . I have been induced to improve the leisure Providence had lent, to record as they passed, in the following pages, the new and unexperienced events exhibited in a land previously blessed with peace, liberty, simplicity, and virtue."[2]

The result was a "History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution, Interspersed with Biographical, Political and Moral Reflections,"—a work which, although not published until the year 1805, seems to have been composed, in large part, almost contemporaneously[3] with the events of which it speaks.

Even a casual glance is enough to discover to us that this is a history of the great Anglo-American Controversy from

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[1] Mercy Warren, "History," etc., i, Pref. iv. [2] Ibid. Pref. iii.

[3] Fairly to be inferred from sentences in the first three pages of the Preface.

the particular point of view of the Otises, the Warrens, and the Adamses of New England. Here is no pretense to historic disinterestedness, to judicial coolness or judicial breadth. Here from beginning to end, is a frank, strong, well-spiced story of a renowned race-quarrel, by one who had a passionate share in every stage of it, and who had an honest abhorrence for those—especially among her own countrymen—who took the side opposite to her own. These people are "the malignant party"[1]; to describe their ablest leader is "to exhibit the deformed features" of the human species[2]; to name him is to name "a notorious parricide."[3] Of course, with this tone of undisguised partisanship ringing through the book, no reader of it can ever be off his guard. Indeed, one comes rather to enjoy the naïveté, the verve, the piquant flavor of this heroic vindictiveness, as an amusing survival of a dispute so long dead,—as a note of authenticity, likewise, in a document which sprang from the very froth and ferment of those high rages of which it gives the outward manifestation.

The literary form of the work is not to be despised. Its chief faults are diffuseness, the swamping of narrative in disquisition, the solemn announcement of ethical and political truisms. Upon the whole, however, as a history of the American Revolution, it is a life-like and a powerful delineation of a great period, and by a writer who had, and who used, extraordinary opportunities for knowing its origin, its growth, its vicissitudes, its ablest men, its most prominent events, its most secret passages. Doubtless, those parts of the book to which the modern reader is most likely to turn, are its portraits of the men prominent in the Revolution on either side—more particularly of the men toward whom Mercy Warren was unable to exhibit that twice-blest quality somewhat ironically announced in her baptismal name. Not a few of these character-sketches have a neatness in disapproval and a discriminating acridity of touch, which must have been keenly enjoyed by almost all persons

[1] "History," i. 60. [2] Ibid. 78. [3] Ibid. 123.

—excepting the subjects of them. Governor Francis Bernard, for example, "was by education strongly impressed with high ideas of canon and feudal law, and fond of a system of government that had been long obsolete in England, and had never had an existence in America."[1] Thomas Hutchinson "was dark, intriguing, insinuating, haughty and ambitious; while the extreme of avarice marked each feature of his character. His abilities were little above the line of mediocrity; yet by dint of industry, exact temperance, and indefatigable labor, he became master of the accomplishments necessary to acquire popular fame. Though bred a merchant, he had looked into the origin and the principles of the British constitution, and made himself acquainted with the several forms of government established in the colonies; he had acquired some knowledge of the common law of England, diligently studied the intricacies of Machiavelian policy, and never failed to recommend the Italian master as a model to his adherents."[2] As to General Gage, "it was indeed unfortunate for him, that he had been appointed to the command of an army and the government of a province, without the talents that qualified for the times. He was naturally a man of a humane disposition, nor had his courage ever been impeached; but he had not the intrigue of the statesman to balance the parties, nor the sagacity necessary to defeat their designs; nor was he possessed of that soldierly promptitude that leaves no interval between the determination and execution of his projects."[3] General Charles Lee "was plain in his person even to ugliness, and careless in his manners to a degree of rudeness. He possessed a bold genius and an unconquerable spirit: his voice was rough, his garb ordinary, his deportment morose. . . . He cherished the American cause from motives of resentment, and a predilection in favor of freedom, more than from a just sense of the rights of mankind. Without religion or country, principle or attachment, gold was his deity, and liberty the idol of his fancy: he hoarded the

[1] "History," etc., i. 42. [2] Ibid. 79. [3] Ibid. 241.

former without taste for its enjoyment, and worshipped the latter as the patroness of licentiousness rather than the protectress of virtue. He affected to despise the opinion of the world, yet was fond of applause. Ambitious of fame, without the dignity to support it, he emulated the heroes of antiquity in the field, while in private life he sunk to the vulgarity of the clown." [1]

XIV.

From the year of the Declaration of Independence onward to the close of the Revolution, probably no other man in America was more eager and more indefatigable in the effort to obtain materials—oral, written, and printed—touching the history of that great movement than was William Gordon, an adoptive American, who, born in England in 1740, came to this country in 1770, drawn hither by his sympathy with the American cause, and who from 1772 to 1786 was pastor of the Third Congregational Church in Roxbury, Massachusetts. A blunt, restless, headstrong person, quite unhampered by shyness or reticence, "somewhat vain, and not accurate nor judicious, very zealous in the cause, and a well-meaning man, but incautious," [2] he plunged at once and with great ardor into the politics of his newly-chosen country; and at the end of four years, being "struck with the importance of the scenes that were opening upon the world," [3] he formed the resolution to record them worthily, for the benefit of mankind. In order to qualify himself for this large task, he made his purpose widely known; traveled up and down the land in pursuit of knowledge under difficulties; became a familiar figure in council, congress, and camp; ransacked manuscript records [4];

[1] "History," etc., i. 292.

[2] J. Adams, "Works," ii. 424.

[3] W. Gordon, "History," etc., i. Pref.

[4] Thus, in order to make himself acquainted with the antecedent history of the country, he even read "near thirty folio manuscript volumes" of the records of Massachusetts Bay. So, also, he had from Congress the extraordinary favor of being allowed to inspect "such of their records as could with propriety be submitted to the perusal of a private person." "History," etc., Pref.

begged or borrowed letters, memoranda, and all sorts of confidential documents; compared notes with other laborers in the same field [1]; and hobnobbing with leading statesmen and generals,[2] set their talk a flowing in the channel of those events of which they knew best the inward meaning, and even got from them careful written statements of fact, as well as the privilege of looking into their own "papers both of a public and private nature."

As a collector of materials for history, therefore, Gordon seems to have had the true method. Had he the true method, also, as a writer of history? It was his purpose, certainly, that the very truth about the American Revolution should be told, even at the risk of giving mortal offense to any person or party concerned in it. "I shall endeavor," he wrote in 1782, "that what I write shall be not only the truth, but the truth truly represented; for you may tell the truth so as to make a lie of it in the apprehensions of him who reads or hears the tale." [3]

It is probable that in the actual composition of his work, he did not go very far until, near the close of the Revolution, its historic character had been placed beyond doubt or reversal. At any rate, not until the spring of 1786 was he quite ready to send the book to press.[4] For the purpose

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[1] For example, with David Ramsay of South Carolina, who permitted him to see the materials for his "History of the War in Carolina." "History," etc., Pref.

[2] He derived much information from Washington, Gates, Greene, Lincoln and Otho Williams. He became so intimate with Gates that he sometimes addressed him as "My dear Horatio." In the voluminous papers of Gates, still unpublished, but in the good keeping of the New York Historical Society, I noted many proofs of Gordon's tact and diligence in drawing from that officer his knowledge of Revolutionary events: *e. g.*, one letter in 1780; three in 1781; three in 1782; and two in 1783.

[3] MS. letter to General Gates, 16 October, 1782, in the "Gates Papers."

[4] I regard Gordon's book as belonging only in part to the period treated of by me in the present work: it was prepared during the Revolution; it was chiefly written and published after the Revolution. This is why I here speak of it at all, and also why I do not speak of it at greater length—at a length, indeed, somewhat more commensurate with its real importance as a history of our Revolution by a contemporary observer.

of doing so, he deemed it prudent to go back to England, where, indeed, he had long before resolved to spend the remainder of his life. So early as the year 1782, he had explained all this to General Gates, in a letter which is full of significance as affecting both the attitude of the American people at that time toward the history of their Revolution, and also the intended frankness of his own narrative in blurting out a good deal of truth about it that would be disagreeable to them: "The eastern country is so altered in its manners, and through the contagions of the times the face of affairs is so changed, that I mean after the war to return to London, where my nearest and dearest friends reside. . . . Should Great Britain mend its constitution by the shock it has received, and the dangerous fever, in which it has been, prove the occasion of its working off its bad humors, life, liberty, property, and character will be safer there than on this side the Atlantic; and an historian may use the impartial pen there with less danger than here. The credit of the country and of individuals who now occupy eminences will be most horribly affected by an impartial history." [1]

Soon after his arrival in England, however, Gordon made the discovery—which seems to have surprised him—that objections to an impartial history of the American Revolution were not confined to the western side of the Atlantic. If he had left America in order to escape from one set of prejudices, he had come to England only to dash his head and his heart against another set, equally bitter, equally unrelenting. His old friend, John Adams, then in London as American envoy near the Court of St. James, gave long afterward, in a letter to Elbridge Gerry, some account of poor Gordon's new embarrassment: "It is with grief that I record a fact, which I ought to record, relative to Gordon's history. His object was profit. He was told that his book would not sell, if printed according to his manuscript. . . . He was told, besides, that the style was so bold

[1] MS. letter to Gates, 16 October, 1782, in the "Gates Papers."

that it would damn the work, and that many things were so favorable to America and others so disgraceful to Britons that neither would be borne. Accordingly, the style and spirit was altered and accommodated more to the British taste and feelings."[1] In one particular, at least, this testimony of John Adams seems to have been unfair to Gordon. Of course, Gordon hoped to get some profit from the sale of his book—in the preparation of which he had made a great outlay, not only in time, but in money also. His possible failure to obtain such profit, however, was not the most serious consequence with which he was threatened, should he dare to publish his book just as he had written it; for, having submitted the manuscript to an English friend, competent to advise in such a matter, he was assured that, besides being, as the English would think, "too favorable to the Americans," it was full of what the English law would regard as libels,—"libels against some of the most respectable characters in the British army and navy; and that if he possessed a fortune equal to the Duke of Bedford's, he would not be able to pay the damages that might be recovered against him—as the truth would not be allowed to be produced in evidence."[2]

For us, of course, it is now easy to see precisely what, under such circumstances, Gordon should have done: he should have deposited his manuscript in some safe custody —there to remain until, in a later age and long after he himself should have left the world, the English-speaking peoples on both sides of the Atlantic might have so far cooled from the anger generated by their Great Dispute as to be willing to read an impartial account of it. To such a sacrifice of immediate reputation, and especially of immediate fortune, Gordon had not the strength to submit. Accordingly, either by his own hand or by the hand of another,

[1] In J. T. Austin, "The Life of Elbridge Gerry," Part i., 520.

[2] "Recollections of a Bostonian," a series of letters published in "The Boston Centinel," in 1821–1822, and reprinted in Niles, "Prin. and Acts of the Rev.," 479–486. The passage quoted by me is on page 483.

his book underwent serious mutilation: its form was entirely recast; a multitude of expressions were toned down; many details of fact were modified; entire passages of the narrative, amounting to an hundred pages at the least, were stricken out altogether.[1]

All this, certainly, is most lamentable; and the discovery, if such a thing were possible, of the unmutilated manuscript of Gordon's "History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America," would now be an event of capital interest to all students of modern history.[2] The book, as we have it, though written by a man who strove hard to be accurate, is defaced by many errors both of fact and of opinion; and yet with all its faults of whatever kind, and even in competition with the subsequent historical labors of more than a century, this account of the American Revolution holds its ground as one of the best yet produced by any one upon that vast uprising of human nature. It can hardly be possible for any reader of Gordon's book, to resist the impression that he was an honest man, and meant to be a truthful and a fair historian.

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[1] The chief evidence touching the mutilation of Gordon's "History" may be found in Austin, "The Life of Elbridge Gerry," Part i. 520; in Niles, "Prin. and Acts of the Rev.," 482–483; and in "The Hist. Mag.," vi. 82.

[2] "The History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America: Including an Account of the late War, and of the Thirteen Colonies from their Origin to that Period," by William Gordon, D.D., was "printed for the author" in London in 1788, "and sold by Charles Dilly, in the Poultry, and James Buckland, in Pater-Noster Row." It consisted of four dignified volumes, in large type and of good paper. In 1789, there appeared at New York the first American edition, wherein, by help of small type and thin paper, the work was reduced to three volumes, of mean and impoverished aspect. The English edition, besides being the better to look at, is also of the purer text. I cannot doubt that the private papers of Gordon are worth searching for in England. A fairly-good life of him is still lacking. The brief sketch in the "Dictionary of National Biography" has a full supply of those amusing errors of detail which occur in so many of its articles on Anglo-American subjects. The amplest account of Gordon which I have met with, is by James Spear Loring, in "The Historical Magazine," vi. 41–49; 78–[illegible] This, however, besides being disorderly and garrulous, is in other respects unsatisfactory.

Everywhere, also, in its incidental strokes of information, in a thousand casual hints and glances of meaning, one perceives the immense advantage he derived from his intimate communication with the great civilians and soldiers who conducted the Revolution from its beginning to its end. It is true that his brief residence in the country which he made his own with so much ardor, rendered it impossible for him to see the real relation of some events, to understand the true character of some persons; but even that disadvantage had its compensation in his freedom from local and hereditary bias, in the unhackneyed freshness of his judgment, in a sort of aloofness of vision which gave something of the just perspective and of the impartiality that are conferred by actual distance in space or in time. Finally, the fact speaks well for this history of the American Revolution that, at the time of its publication, it dissatisfied both sides in the controversy —a valid token that it was not the product of servility to either side.

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It will be readily understood that the materials included in this list form but a fraction of those actually examined by me in the course of my researches among the writings which have survived to us from our Revolutionary period. Perhaps I ought to add that these researches, when not satisfied within my own library or within that of Cornell University, have laid upon me the pleasant necessity, during the past twenty years, of paying visits not only to the British Museum and to the Public Record Office in London, but to the chief historical libraries in the older portions of our republic—particularly to those of Richmond, Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Brooklyn, New Haven, Providence, Worcester, Cambridge, and Boston.

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Philadelphia: 1889.

LITTELL, JOHN STOCKTON, editor. See Alexander Graydon, Memoirs of His Own Time.

LODGE, HENRY CABOT, Alexander Hamilton.
Boston: 1882.

LODGE, HENRY CABOT, editor. See The Works of Alexander Hamilton.

LOSSING, BENSON J., editor of reprint of Trumbull's M'Fingal.
New York: 1857.
[The copy used by me, is of the year 1864.]

LOYALIST (The) Poetry of the Revolution.
Philadelphia: 1857.
[This book was admirably edited by Winthrop Sargent, who, not placing his name upon the title-page, avowed his connection with the work by subscribing to the Preface the initial letters of his name.]

LOYAL (The) Verses of Joseph Stansbury and Doctor Jonathan Odell, relating to the American Revolution. Now first edited by Winthrop Sargent.
Albany: 1860.

MCCORMICK, SAMUEL JARVIS, editor. See Samuel Peters, A General History of Connecticut. American edition of 1877.

MCMAHON, JOHN VAN LEAR, An Historical View of the Government of Maryland from its Colonization to the Present Day. Vol. i.
Baltimore: 1831.
[No subsequent volume ever appeared.]

MCMASTER, JOHN BACH, Benjamin Franklin as a Man of Letters.
Boston: 1895.

MADISON, JAMES, Letters and Other Writings of. Four volumes.
Philadelphia: 1867.

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Volume viii. New York: 1882.
Volume x. New York: 1883.

MARSHALL, CHRISTOPHER, Extracts from the Diary of, Kept in Philadelphia and Lancaster, during the American Revolution, 1774–1781. Edited by William Duane.
Albany: 1877.

MASSACHUSETTS (The) Historical Society, Collections of. 2 Series. Volume ix.
Boston: 1822.

MASSACHUSETTS (The) Historical Society. Proceedings. Vol. vi.
Boston: 1863.

MATERIALS for History Printed from Original Manuscripts. With Notes and Illustrations. By Frank Moore.
New York: Printed for the Zenger Club: 1861.
[Only one volume, that containing the Correspondence of Henry Laurens, has ever appeared.]

MAY, Sir THOMAS ERSKINE, The Constitutional History of England, 1760–1860. Two volumes.
London: 1861.
[Third edition, with a new supplementary chapter, in three volumes, London, 1871.]

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, Seven Sermons . . . Preached as a Lecture in the West Meeting House . . . Begun the first Thursday in June, and ended the last Thursday in August, 1748.
Boston: 1749.

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, A Discourse concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers, with some Reflections on the Resistance made to King Charles the First, and on the Anniversary of his Death,—in which the mysterious Doctrine of that Prince's Saintship and Martyrdom is unriddled.
Boston: 1750.

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, Sermon on the Death of Frederick, Prince of Wales.
Boston: 1751.

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, Massachusetts Election Sermon for May 29, 1754.
Boston: 1754.
[The titles of this and the previous article are not here given with exactness.]

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, Two Sermons . . . in Boston . . . November 23, 1755, occasioned by the Earthquakes . . . on the Tuesday Morning and Saturday Evening preceding.
Boston: 1755.

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, A Discourse . . . occasioned by the Earthquakes in November, 1755; delivered December 18 following.
Boston: 1755.

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, Sermons upon the following Subjects, etc. . . .
Boston: 1755.
[A very copious title-page, whereon are spread out the subjects of the fourteen sermons contained in the book. My copy is the London re-print of the year 1756.]

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, Two Discourses delivered November 23, 1758; being . . . a Day of Public Thanksgiving, relating more especially to the Success of His Majesty's Arms and those of the King of Prussia the last year.
Boston: n. d.
[These discourses contain stirring tributes to the genius and heroism of Frederick, and to the politico-religious significance of his victories.]

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, Two Discourses, delivered October 25, 1759, being . . . a Day of Public Thanksgiving for the Success of His Majesty's Arms, more particularly in the Reduction of Quebec.
Boston: 1759.

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, A Sermon occasioned by the Great Fire in Boston, . . . March 20, 1760.
Boston: 1760.

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, Two Discourses, delivered October 9, 1760, being . . . a Day of Public Thanksgiving for the Success of His Majesty's Arms, more especially in the entire Reduction of Canada.
Boston: 1760.

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, A Discourse occasioned by the Death of the Hon. Stephen Sewall, Esq., Chief-Justice of the Superior Court of Judicature, etc.
Boston: 1760.

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, Practical Discourses, delivered on Occasion of the Earthquakes in November, 1755.
Boston: 1760.
[This is the date of their first publication.]

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, A Discourse occasioned by the Death of King George II. and the happy Accession of His Majesty King George III., . . . delivered January 4, 1761.
Boston: 1761.

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, Striving to Enter in at the Strait Gate, Explained and Inculcated, . . . in Two Sermons.
Boston: 1761.

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, Two Sermons on the Nature, Extent and Perfection of the Divine Goodness.
Boston: 1763.

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, Christian Sobriety, being Eight Sermons on Titus ii., 6, preached with a special View to the Benefit of the Young Men, etc.
Boston: 1763.

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, Observations on the Charter and Conduct of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.
Boston: 1763.

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, Answer to a Candid Examination in Defence of the Charter of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.
Boston: 1764.

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, Remarks on an anonymous Tract, entitled An Answer to Dr. Mayhew's Observations, etc.
Boston: 1764.

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, A Letter of Reproof to Mr. John Cleaveland of Ipswich, occasioned by a Defamatory Libel published under his Name, etc.
Boston: 1764.

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, Popish Idolatry. A Discourse at the Dudleian Lecture, May 8, 1765.
Boston: 1765.

MAYHEW, JONATHAN, The Snare Broken. A Thanksgiving Discourse, preached at the Desire of the West Church in Boston, N. E., Friday, May 23, 1766, occasioned by the Repeal of the Stamp Act.
Boston: 1766.

MEIGS, JOSIAH, An Oration pronounced before a Public Assembly in New Haven, on the Fifth Day of November, 1781, at the Celebration of the Glorious Victory over . . . Cornwallis at Yorktown.
New Haven: 1782.

MEIGS, RETURN JONATHAN, A Journal of Occurrences which happened within the Circle of Observation in the Detachment commanded by Colonel Benedictine Arnold, consisting of Two Battalions which were detached from the Army at Cambridge in the year 1775: n. p.; n. d.

MILTON, JOHN, The Prose Works of. With a Preface, Preliminary Remarks, and Notes, by J. A. St. John. Five volumes.
London: n. d.

MINER, CHARLES, History of Wyoming, In a Series of Letters to His Son, William T. Miner.
Philadelphia: 1845.

MONTHLY Anthology (The); or Magazine of Polite Literature. Ten volumes.
Boston: 1803–1811.

MONTHLY Review (The); or, Literary Journal: By Several Hands. Volume xxxix.
London: 1768.

MOORE, FRANK, Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution.
New York: 1856.

MOORE, FRANK, Diary of the American Revolution. From Newspapers and Original Documents. Two volumes.
New York and London: 1859–1860.

MOORE FRANK, Illustrated Ballad History of the American Revolution. 1765–1783.
New York: 1876.
[This work was to be published by subscription and in "Parts" of about sixty pages each. With the issue of Part vi., the work was discontinued. No formal narrative is attempted; but the selections from contemporary writings, in prose and verse, are "collected and arranged in a somewhat confused order, with annotations.]

MOORE, FRANK, editor. See Materials for History.

MOORE FRANK, editor. See Correspondence of Henry Laurens.

MOORE, GEORGE HENRY, John Dickinson, the Author of the Declaration on taking up Arms in 1775. With a Fac-simile of the Original Draft.
New York: 1890.

MOORE, JOHN HAMILTON, A New and Complete Collection of Voyages and Travels.
London: n. d.
[Contains an abridgement of Jonathan Carver's Travels.]

MORLEY, JOHN, Edmund Burke: A Historical Study.
London: 1867.

MORSE, JOHN TORREY, Jr., The Life of Alexander Hamilton. Two volumes.
Boston: 1876.

MORSE, JOHN TORREY, Jr., Thomas Jefferson.
Boston: 1883.

MORSE, JOHN TORREY, Jr., Benjamin Franklin.
Boston: 1889.

MOTLEY Assembly (The): a Farce, Published for the Entertainment of the Curious.
Boston: 1779.

NATIONAL (The) Portrait Gallery of Distinguished Americans. Conducted by James B. Longacre, and James Herring. Second volume.
Philadelphia, New York, and London: 1835.

NEILL, EDWARD DUFFIELD, Reverend Jacob Duché, the First Chaplain of Congress.
[See Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, ii. 58–73.]

NEW (The) London Gazette, from September 6, 1765, to November 1, 1765.
[Manuscript copies of five essays therein by Stephen Johnson, made under the direction of Professor E. E. Salisbury of Yale College, and placed at my disposal by his courtesy.]

NILES, H., Principles and Acts of the Revolution in America.
Baltimore: 1822.

NINETEENTH Century (The). A Monthly Review. Edited by James Knowles.
Number 131, January, 1888.
London: 1888.

NOTES and Queries: A Medium of Intercommunication for Literary Men, General Readers, etc. Ninety-two volumes.
London: 1849–1895.

NOVANGLUS and Massachusettensis; or, Political Essays, published in the Years 1774 and 1775, on the principal points of Controversy between Great Britain and her Colonies. The former by John Adams, late President of the United States; the latter by Jonathan Sewall, then King's Attorney General of the Province of Massachusetts-Bay. To which are added a number of Letters lately written by President Adams to the Honorable William Tudor, some of which were never before published.
Boston: 1819.
[This book was published under the auspices of John Adams. The positive announcement, made upon the title page, that Sewall was the author of "Massachusettensis," is repeated in the Preface, written by John Adams, who there gives a sketch of the man whom he says he "knew" from the first to be the writer with whom he had held controversy. Two years afterward, he learned that for nearly fifty years he had been attributing these letters to the wrong man, and that they were in reality the work of Daniel Leonard. Apparently as a compliment to President Adams, an absurd arrangement is given to the two sets of letters: those of Novanglus are placed before the letters of Massachusettensis, which preceded them in time, and to which they are a reply. Accordingly, he who reads the book intelligently, is obliged to read it backwards.]

OBSERVATIONS on the Reconciliation of Great Britain and the Colonies. . . . By a Friend of American Liberty.
Philadelphia: 1776.
[According to Sabin, Mr. Franklin Burdge attributes this pamphlet to Jacob Green. This opinion cannot be adopted, if we accept the testimony of Green's son, President Ashbel Green, who states that Green was one of the early advocates of Independence. This pamphlet deprecates a resort to Independence.]

OCCUM, SAMSON, A Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul, an Indian.
Salem: 1773.

OPPRESSION, a Poem by an American. With Notes by a North Briton.
Boston: 1765.
[This is a reprint of the original edition as published in London.]

ORATIONS Delivered at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston, to commemorate the Evening of the Fifth of March, 1770, When a number of Citizens were killed by a Party of British Troops, in a Time of Peace.
Boston: n. d.
[The Preface is dated Boston, January, 1785.]

OSGOOD, DAVID, A Sermon on Thanksgiving Day, December 11, 1783.
Boston: 1784.

OTHER Side of the Question (The); or, A Defence of the Liberties of North America. In Answer to a late "Friendly Address to all Reasonable Americans on the Subject of our Political Confusions." By a Citizen.
New York: 1774.
[The copy used by me belonged to George Bancroft, and is now in the Lenox Library.]

OTIS, JAMES, The Rudiments of Latin Prosody; With a Dissertation on Letters and the Principles of Harmony in Poetic and Prosaic Composition. Collected from Some of the best Writers.
Boston: 1760.

OTIS, JAMES, A Vindication of the Conduct of the House of Representatives of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay, more particularly in the last Session of the General Assembly.
Boston: 1762.

OTIS, JAMES, The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved. Second edition.
London: n. d.

OTIS, JAMES, A Vindication of the British Colonies, against the Aspersions of the Halifax Gentleman, in his Letter to a Rhode Island Friend.
London: 1769.
[My references are to this copy, in the library of Cornell University; which, however, I compared with the original Boston edition, as loaned me by the librarian of Harvard College.]

OTIS, JAMES, Brief Remarks on the Defence of the Halifax Libel on the British-American Colonies.
Boston: 1765.

OTIS, JAMES, Considerations on behalf of the Colonists, In a Letter to a Noble Lord. Second edition.
London: 1765.

PAINE, THOMAS, A Dialogue between the Ghost of General Montgomery, just arrived from the Elysian Fields, and an American Delegate, in a Wood near Philadelphia.
Philadelphia: 1776.
New York: Privately Reprinted. 1865.
[On page 36 of the second volume of the present work, I refer to the above tract as "confidently attributed to Paine," and at the same time I call attention to certain literary qualities in it which seem to suggest that it was from some other writer. I have since recalled the fact that soon after the publication of the "Dialogue," Paine himself publicly denied that he was its author.]

PAINE, THOMAS, The Political Writings of. Two volumes.
Boston: 1870.

PAINE, THOMAS, The Writings of. Collected and Edited by Moncure Daniel Conway. Four volumes.
New York: 1894–1896.
[This collection may fairly be regarded as the final edition of the writings of Paine. Those of his writings which were produced before the close of the period embraced in my work, occupy the first volume and the first 131 pages of the second volume of Conway's edition. As my own chapters on Paine were written long before the publication of the latter, my references, unless otherwise stated, are to the Boston edition of Paine, 1870.]

PARKMAN, FRANCIS, The Conspiracy of Pontiac, and the Indian War after the Conquest of Canada. Ninth edition, revised with Additions. Two volumes.
Boston: 1880.

PARTON, JAMES, The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin. Two volumes.
Boston: 1892.

PATER, WALTER H., Studies in the History of the Renaissance.
London: 1873.

PATRIOT (The) Preachers of the American Revolution. With Biographical Sketches. 1766–1783.
n. p.: 1860.
[The entry for copyright is in the Southern District of New York.]

PENNSYLVANIA (The) Magazine of History and Biography.
Volume ii. Philadelphia: 1878.
Volume iii. Philadelphia: 1879.

PENNSYLVANIA, Memoirs of the Historical Society of. Volume i. Being a republication, edited by Edward Armstrong.
Philadelphia: 1864.

PERRY, THOMAS SERGEANT, Life and Letters of Francis Lieber.
Boston: 1882.

PETERS, SAMUEL, A General History of Connecticut, From its First Settlement under George Fenwick, Esq., to its Latest Period of Amity with Great Britain; Including a Description of the Country, and many curious and interesting Anecdotes. To which is added an Appendix, wherein new and the true Sources of the present Rebellion in America are pointed out, together with the particular Part taken by the People of Connecticut in its Promotion. By a Gentleman of the Province. Second edition.
London: 1782.
[The first edition appeared in London, in 1781.]

PETERS, SAMUEL, A General History of Connecticut, etc.
Reprint of the first London edition, New Haven: 1829.

PETERS, SAMUEL, A General History of Connecticut, etc.
Reprint of the first London edition, with addition to the appendix, notes, and extracts from letters, verifying many important statements made by the author, by Samuel Jarvis McCormick.
New York: 1877.

PETERS, SAMUEL, A History of the Reverend Hugh Peters, A.M.
New York: 1807.

PICKERING, OCTAVIUS, The Life of Timothy Pickering. Volume i.
Boston: 1867.
[Upon the author's death, the work, left by him unfinished, was completed, in three additional volumes, by Charles Wentworth Upham.]

PITT, WILLIAM, Earl of Chatham, Correspondence of. Ed. by William Stanhope Taylor, Esq., and Captain John Henry Pringle. Four volumes.
London: 1838–1840.

PLAIN Truth, Addressed to the Inhabitants of America; Containing Remarks on a late Pamphlet entitled Common Sense . . . Written by Candidus.
Philadelphia: 1776.

POORE, BEN. PERLEY, Editor. See the Federal and State Constitutions.

POPE, ALEXANDER, The Works of, In Nine Volumes, Complete, With his Last Corrections, Additions and Improvements, . . . together with the Commentary and Notes of Mr. Warburton.
London: 1753.

PORTER, ELIPHALET, A Sermon at the First Religious Society, Roxbury, on Thanksgiving Day, December 11, 1783.
Boston: 1784.

POWER and Grandeur (The) of Great Britain founded on the Liberty of the Colonies; and the Mischiefs attending the Taxing them by Act of Parliament Demonstrated.
New York: 1768.

PRINGLE, JOHN HENRY, editor, See William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, Correspondence of.

PRIOR Documents. See J. Almon.

PRIOR, Sir JAMES, Life of Edmond Malone.
London: 1860.

PROUD, ROBERT, The History of Pennsylvania, in North America, From the original Institution and Settlement of that Province, under the first Proprietor and Governor William Penn, in 1681, till after the Year 1742. Two volumes.
Philadelphia: 1797–1798.

QUINCY, ELIZA SUSAN, editor. See Josiah Quincy, Memoir of the Life of Josiah Quincy, Junior.

QUINCY'S Massachusetts Reports. Reports of Cases argued and adjudged in the Superior Court of Judicature of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, Between 1761 and 1772. By Josiah Quincy, Junior. . . . Edited by his great-grandson, Samuel M. Quincy. With an Appendix upon the Writs of Assistance.
Boston: 1865.
[This Appendix is an important contribution to the history of the subject, and is by Mr. Justice Gray, of the Supreme Court of the United States.]

QUINCY, JOSIAH, Junior, Observations on the Act of Parliament Commonly Called the Boston Port-Bill; with Thoughts on Civil Society and Standing Armies.
Boston: 1774.

QUINCY, JOSIAH, Memoir of the Life of Josiah Quincy, Junior, of Massachusetts Bay: 1744–1775. Third Edition. Edited by Eliza Susan Quincy.
Boston: 1875.

RANDALL, HENRY STEPHENS, The Life of Thomas Jefferson. Three volumes.
New York: 1858.

REED, WILLIAM BRADFORD, Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed. Two volumes.
Philadelphia: 1847.

REGULATIONS (The) lately made concerning the Colonies, and the Taxes imposed upon them, considered.
London: 1765.
[In his own copy of this important pamphlet, Jared Sparks wrote: "By Geo. Grenville. Some say by Mr. Campbell, one of the agents for Georgia, but without proof." Whether actually written by Grenville or not, it undoubtedly was written under his eye, and may be taken as representing him.]

RESIGNATION. In Two Parts, and A Postscript to Mrs. B.
London. Philadelphia re-printed: 1764.
[The "Postscript," at least, was probably by Elizabeth Fergusson; and "Mrs. B." is believed to have been Mrs. Boudinot.]

RHODE ISLAND Historical Society (The), Collections of. Volume vii.
Providence: 1885.

ROBINSON, HENRY CRABB, Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of. Selected and edited by Thomas Sadler. Two volumes. Third edition.
London and New York: 1872.

ROBINSON, MATTHEW, (afterward Lord Rokeby), Considerations on the Measures Carrying on with respect to the British Colonies in North America.
Boston: 1774.
[Originally printed in London.]

RODGERS, JOHN, The Divine Goodness Displayed in the American Revolution; A Sermon Preached in New York, December 11, 1783.
New York: 1783
[Reprinted in Patriot Preachers of the Am. Rev., 312–343.]

RODGERS, JOHN, Sermon at Princeton, May 6th, 1795, occasioned by the death of Rev. John Witherspoon.
New York: 1795.

ROGERS, Major ROBERT, Journals of: Containing an Account of the several Excursions he made under the Generals who commanded upon the Continent of North America during the late War.
London: 1765.
[A very corrupt edition of this work, under the title of "Reminiscences of the French War," etc., was published at Concord, New Hampshire, in 1831.]

ROGERS, ROBERT, A Concise Account of North America: Containing a Description of the several British Colonies on that Continent, including the Islands of New Foundland, Cape Briton, etc.
London: 1765.

ROGERS, ROBERT, Ponteach : or the Savages of America. A Tragedy.
London : 1766.
[I first saw a copy of this very rare book in the library of Mr. John Nicholas Brown, Providence, R. I., and subsequently used the copy in the Fiske Harris Collection now belonging to the library of Brown University. That it was written by Rogers, either wholly or in part, is a matter of inference.]

ROGERS, ROBERT, Journal of the Siege of Detroit. Edited by Franklin B. Hough.
Albany : 1860.
[This forms part of No. iv. of Munsell's Historical Series.]

RUSSELL, Lord JOHN, editor. See Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox.

SABIN, JOSEPH, A Dictionary of Books relating to America, From its Discovery to the Present Time. Nineteen volumes, together with a part of volume xx.
New York : 1868–1892.

SABINE, LORENZO, Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution, with an Historical Essay. Two volumes.
Boston : 1864.

SADLER, THOMAS, editor. See Diary, etc., of Henry Crabb Robinson.

ST. JOHN, JAMES AUGUSTUS, editor. See The Prose Works of John Milton.

SALMON, THOMAS, A New Geographical and Historical Grammar. Eleventh edition.
London : 1769.

SAMPSON, EZRA, Sermon at Roxbury Camp, before Colonel Cotton's Regiment, July 20, 1775.
Watertown : 1775.

SANDERSON, JOHN, Biography of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence. Nine volumes.
Philadelphia : 1823–1827.

SANFORD, ENOCH, History of the Town of Berkley, Mass.
New York : 1872.

SARGENT, WINTHROP, editor. See the Loyal Verses of Stansbury and Odell.

SARGENT, WINTHROP, editor. See The Loyalist Poetry of the Revolution.

SARGENT, WINTHROP, editor. See Letters of John Andrews.

SAVAGE, JAMES, editor. See The History of New England, by John Winthrop.

SCHARF, JOHN THOMAS, History of Maryland, From the Earliest Period to the Present Day. Three volumes.
Baltimore : 1879.

SCHILLER, The Poems and Ballads of. Translated by Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, Bart. Tauchnitz edition.
Leipzig : 1844.

SCHILLER, The Poems and Ballads of. Translated by Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, Bart. From the Last London Edition.
New York : 1866.

SCHILLERS sämtliche Werke in fünfzehn Bänden. Mit Einleitungen von Karl Goedeke.
Stuttgart.
[These volumes, which are without date, are a part of the Cotta'sche Bibliothek der Weltlitteratur.]

SCOTT, SIR WALTER, editor. See a Collection of Scarce and Valuable Tracts.

SCOTT, SIR WALTER, The Poetical Works of, with a Memoir of the Author. Nine volumes.
Boston : 1857.

SCOTT, SIR WALTER, The Journal of : From the Original Manuscript at Abbotsford. Two volumes.
New York : 1890.

SCUDDER, HORACE ELISHA, editor. See Recollections of Samuel Breck.

SEABURY, SAMUEL, Free Thoughts on the Proceedings of the Continental Congress, held at Philadelphia September 5, 1774 : wherein their Errors are exhibited, their Reasonings confuted, and the fatal Tendency of their Non-Importation, Non-Exportation, and Non-Consumption Measures are laid open to the plainest Understandings ; and the only Means pointed out for preserving and securing our present happy Constitution. . . . By a Farmer.
n. p. 1774.

SEABURY, SAMUEL, The Congress Canvassed ; or, An Examination into the Conduct of the Delegates, at their Grand Convention held in Philadelphia, September 1, 1774. Addressed to the Merchants of New York. By A. W. Farmer, Author of Free Thoughts, etc.
n. p. : 1774.

SEABURY, SAMUEL, A View of the Controversy between Great Britain and her Colonies : Including a Mode of determining their present Disputes, finally and effectually, and of preventing all future Contentions. In a Letter to the Author of A Full Vindication of the Measures of the Congress from the Calumnies of their Enemies. By A. W. Farmer, Author of Free Thoughts, etc.
New York : 1774.

SEABURY, SAMUEL, An Alarm to the Legislature of the Province of New York, occasioned by the present Political Disturbances in North America : Addressed to the Honorable Representatives in General Assembly Convened.
New York : 1775.

SEABURY, SAMUEL, The Republican Dissected, or, The Anatomy of an American Whig. By A. W. Farmer.
New York : 1775.
[Advertised in Rivington's New York Gazetteer for April 20, 1775, as "speedily to be published." I have found no evidence that it ever saw the light.]

SECRET Journals of the Acts and Proceedings of Congress, From the First Meeting thereof to the Dissolution of the Confederation, by the Adoption of the Constitution of the United States. Four volumes.
Boston : 1821.

SEDGWICK, THEODORE, Jun., A Memoir of the Life of William Livingston.
New York : 1833.

SEWALL, JONATHAN. See Novanglus and Massachusettensis.

SEWALL, JONATHAN, The Americans Roused, in a Cure for the Spleen ; or, Amusement for a Winter's Evening : Being the Substance of a Conversation on the Times, over a Friendly Tankard and Pipe.
New England : Printed.
New York, Re-printed, by James Harrington : n. d.

SIMMS, WILLIAM GILMORE, editor. See Army Correspondence of John Laurens.

SIMONS, MICHAEL LAIRD, editor. See Duyckinck, Cyclopædia of American Literature, revised edition.

SLOANE, WILLIAM MILLIGAN, The French War and the Revolution.
New York : 1893.

SMITH, GOLDWIN, The United States. An Outline of Political History 1492–1871.
New York : 1893.

SMITH, HORACE WEMYSS, Life and Correspondence of the Reverend William Smith, D.D. Two volumes.
Philadelphia : 1880.

SMITH, SYDNEY, The Works of. Fourth edition. Three volumes.
London : 1848.

SMITH, WILLIAM, An Historical Account of the Expedition against the Ohio Indians in the Year 1764, under the Command of Henry Bouquet, Esquire, Colonel of Foot, and now Brigadier General in America.
Cincinnati : 1868.
[This is a reprint of the London edition of 1766, under the modern title of "Historical Account of Bouquet's Expedition against the Ohio Indians in 1764," and forming one of the "Ohio Valley Historical Series."]

SMITH, WILLIAM, D.D., Late Provost of the College and Academy of Philadelphia, The Works of. Two volumes.
Philadelphia : 1803.

SMYTH, ALBERT H., The Philadelphia Magazines and their Contributors 1741–1850.
Philadelphia : 1892.

SOUTH CAROLINA Historical Society, Collections of. Volume i.
Charleston : 1857.

SOUTHEY, ROBERT. See the Works of William Cowper.

SPARKS, JARED, editor. See the Writings of George Washington.

SPARKS, JARED, editor. See the Works of Benjamin Franklin.

SPARKS, JARED, editor. See the Library of American Biography.

SPARKS, JARED, editor. See Correspondence of the American Revolution.

SPRAGUE, WILLIAM B., Life of Timothy Dwight, in Sparks's Library of American Biography, xiv. 223–364.

SPRAGUE, WILLIAM B., Annals of the American Pulpit ; or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations, From the early Settlement of the Country to the Year 1855. With Historical Introductions. Nine volumes.
New York : 1859–1869.

STATUTES (The) at Large. Vol. ix.
London : 1765.

STEDMAN, EDMUND CLARENCE, Poets of America.
Boston and New York : 1885.

STEPHEN, LESLIE, History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century. Two volumes. Second edition.
London : 1881.

STEPHEN, LESLIE, editor. See Dictionary of National Biography.

STILES, EZRA, Oratio Funebris pro Exequiis Jonathan Law.
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